

T H E

Sinner's Complaint

The Sinner's Complaint.
G O D,

B E I N G

Devout Entertainments

O F T H E

SOUL with GOD,

F I T T E D F O R

All States and Conditions of Christians,
whatever their Circumstances or Necessities be.

By JOHN GOTHER,

Author of the Instructions on the Epistles and Gospels
for all the Sundays and moveable Feasts in the Year.

D U B L I N:

PRINTED BY JAMES HOEY, JUNIOR,
at the MERCURY-in-PARLIAMENT-STREET,
M,DCC,LXXIV.

1607/5063





TO THE READER.

TO offer Help to such as are in Want, needs no Apology; therefore I make none; but only tell the Reader, that Compassion on the general Corruption of Christians has been the Occasion of this Work, and accordingly it offers Help to all; there being no Kind of Sinner, whatever his Unhappiness or Infirmitiy be, but is here conducted before the Throne of Mercy, from whence all his Help is to come; and likewise taught, how to ask for the Help he wants: And not only to ask, but so many Instructions are mixed with the Petitions, that while he asks, he will likewise see how to amend, and find, I hope, while he speaks to God, that God at the same Time speaks to him.

If the Petitions under some Heads seem to him long, I must desire him to reflect, that there are some Christians, who having their Time at command, have good Inclinations to consecrate some Hours of it every Day, to God: It is reasonable they should be provided with Exercises, answerable to their Leisure, and to the pious Dispositions of their Hearts. I desire him to reflect again, that as the Multiplicity of Distempers multiplies

Remedies, so here, Help being offered to all, the infinite Number of spiritual Infirmities must necessarily encrease the Number of Petitions. But then, since these, as it is to be hoped, are not wanted by all, after a short Perusal, it will be in every one's Power to shorten the Prayers, by passing those by which they find do not concern them, and thus they may accommodate them to their own Time and Circumstances.

There is another Objection may occur to some against the Length, on Account of the Reproof given in the Gospel to the *Pharisees*, for *making long Prayers*. But it being observed that Christ our Redeemer, who never did any Thing reprobable, spent whole Nights in Prayer, and that both he and his Apostles advise all, to *pray without ceasing*, it must be obvious, that it is not the Length of Prayers, or applying the Soul for a long Time to this Exercise, which is censured in that Reproof; but only the saying long Prayers, with the depraved Design of the *Pharisees*, that is, to be seen by Men, to gain Reputation, and be esteemed devout. This is certainly hypocritical and profane: But when it is done, purely to seek God, and to solicit for his Help, this of itself is not capable of Excess: Since, allowing only for Circumstances, God can be no more sought than he can be loved too much; and we cannot give too much to him, to whom all is due.

But now, while I answer Objections, let these tepid Christians answer one to me, those who take Shelter under this Reproof, and make it their Plea for

TO THE READER.

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or neglecting this Duty of Prayer; let these consider, if they are prepared to answer for their Neglect, what will they say to these Articles?

First, That so often failing in those great Duties, on which their Eternity depends; and there being no Possibility of Help, but from God, they still live on careless and unconcerned, without using due Endeavours in praying for that Help, which they cannot want, but with their eternal Ruin?

2d'y, That having their Hearts corrupted with sinful Passions, their Souls consuming under Variety of Ulcers, and there being no possible Cure, but from God, they still live on so far careless and unconcerned as not to use due Endeavours in praying for that Help which they cannot want, but with their eternal Ruin?

3dly, That having their Souls lying under the Guilt of great Sins, which, without a sincere Repentance, must be certainly their Damnation, and which Repentance they cannot possibly obtain, but through the Gift of God; they still live on so far careless and unconcerned, as not to use due Endeavours in praying for that Help which they cannot want but with their eternal Ruin?

4thly, That having their Time of Life in this World so uncertain, in which all the Help they want of God is to be obtained, that they have not the Security even of one Week, of one Day, or one Hour; they still live on every Day so careless as to the Endeavours which ought to be used for

obtaining this Help, as if they had the Power of Life and Death in their own Hands, and were secure that Death would not surprize them, but certainly wait their Leisure, and give them Time necessary for making all the Preparation they want for dying well.

Lastly, That finding Time for every Thing belonging to this World, and their Business, and Interest, and Sports, and Entertainments, and Gaming, and Visits, and Vanity, and unnecessary Sleep, and for all the Demands of Sloth, Self-love, and the World; and not only finding Time, but also being industrious in all these Particulars, so as to study, and contrive, and take Pains, and venture many Inconveniences for gaining this Time; it is only for Prayer they cannot find Leisure, and whenever they spare some little Time for it; they generally run it over in such Haste, perform it with so very little Care, and with so much Dissipation of Thought, that it seems rather some outward Compliance, and a mere Lip-service, than a real Concern for obtaining any Thing of God.

Let these tepid Christians, who are thus careless in this great Duty, and indispensable Expedient of Prayer, see if they can answer, I do not say to me, but to their own Consciences and to God, these Articles drawn up against them.

They are secure in one Point, that they shall not be condemned with the *Pharisees*, for saying or loving long Prayers; but what Security have they,
not

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not to be condemned for omitting or transgressing the fundamental Duties, which are enjoined them by the Gospel they profess?

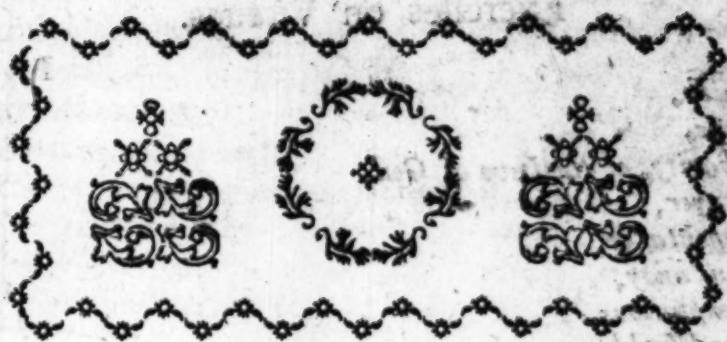
For, without accounting for their positive Crimes, is it not to be feared, from this one Neglect of Prayer, as laid open under the following Heads: *First*, That they have not a Sense of the unhappy State of their Souls, occasioned by their many Infirmities, Disorders and Sins; *2dly*, That they have not a true Concern for the Amendment of them; *3dly*, That they are not solicitous to repent, and consequently are not desiring to make their Peace with God; *4thly*, Nor serious in the Business of Salvation; *5thly*, That they do not love God, nor serve him in Earnest; *6thly*, Nor seek first the Kingdom of God; *7thly*, But are much more concerned for Earth, for their Interest, and Satisfaction, than for Heaven; *8thly*, That they love the World, which is *Enmity with God*; *9thly*, Are luke-warm, which is an Abomination to him.

I press this not by Way of Reproach, but upon the Motive of true Charity, to awaken these Christians, and give them a timely Sense of their Unhappiness, before Death takes it out of their Power, to work their Deliverance; and I beg such as shall be convinced, to take this Rule ever with them; *That till they can raise their Soul to God with Earnestness, and are solicitous to obtain of him Remedy for their Spiritual Wants, they have not sufficient Grounds for entertaining very favourable Hopes, as to their future State.* So necessary do I think Prayer to be, for all such as are serious in the Concern of Eternity.

But

But then, I do not intend this as an Insinuation for recommending the following Exercise. No, I leave all to the Use and Method of such Prayers as they shall find most beneficent to them, whether in Book or in Spirit only. But as for such as shall make Choice of this Manual, finding a Form helpful to them, I hope they will meet here what may give them a Sense of their InfirmitieS, raise their Hearts towards God, and make them earnest in soliciting for Help. If it has these good Effects, I have likewise my Design, and I own, it will be a Comfort to me to become instrumental to the Good, even of the least Soul that lives. For this End, I fervently recommend to thee, O God, this Book of pious Instructions, and most humbly beseech thee to give a Blessing to it.

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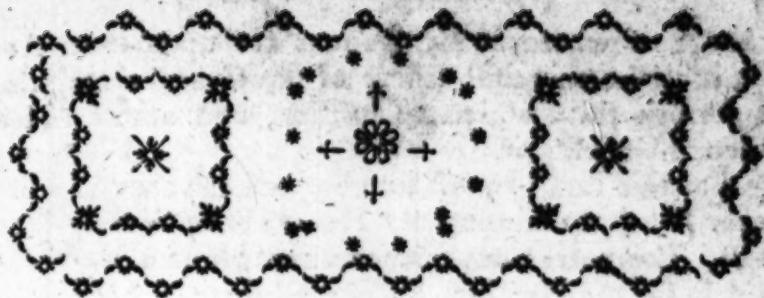
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T H E





T H E
Sinner's Complaint
TO
G O D.

MORNIN G EXERCISES
For all STATES and CONDITIONS.

***** RETURN thee Thanks, O eternal God,
for my Preservation this Night: I own it
I thy Mercy that thou hast brought me to
the Beginning of this Day; my Being
is from thee; preserve now, I beseech
thee, thy own Gift; take me into thy
Protection, watch over me, and so strengthen me by
thy holy Grace, that avoiding this Day all whatever
is sinful, my Thoughts, Words, and Actions, may be
wholly directed by thy Law, and thy Name be glori-
fied in the Being thou hast given me.

Grant, O God, I may be careful in every Duty be-
longing to my State; that I may suffer no Neglect,
Sloth, or Self-love, to hinder me in the faithful Dis-

Morning Exercises.

charge of whatever Obligations are upon me: And let it be the merciful Effect of thy Grace in me, that I perform them all, as a Christian, and not as a Heathen or Unbeliever.

For this End, I most humbly beseech thee in whatever I do, to raise up my Heart above Wordly Interest, Temporal Convenience, and Human Respects; for so far the Heathen looks; all these, I know to be the Considerations of such as knew not God. But since, by thy Grace, I have a Faith in thee, and in a Life eternal to come, let this Faith have an Influence upon all I do, so as to undertake and begin every Thing in thy holy Name, and to offer all to thy Glory.

In this Manner, O God, may all my Actions of this Day be distinguished in thy Sight, from the Unbeliever; so that, while he seeks nothing, but doing his own Will, and proposes nothing farther, than some temporal Convenience, I may undertake all, in Compliance with thy holy Will, in as much as it is a Duty thou hast laid upon me, is well pleasing in thy Sight, and may find Acceptance with thee, in order to the gaining eternal Life.

Thus, O blessed Lord, may I live not only to myself and to this World, but more especially to thee. Thus, O God, may I return to thee, every Day, the Life thou hast given me; thus, while I am in the Flesh, may I seek the Things that are above, and be ever solicitous, that my Life be the Life of the Righteous, that is, the Life of Faith, since it is by Faith the just Man lives.

That this may be now my Life, behold I bow down and acknowledge thee the sovereign Lord of all, I adore thee, as the Author of all created Beings, and supreme Governor of the Universe. Thou art the Beginning and End, and therefore I confess it thy Right, that whatever I do should begin and end in thee.

Upon this Principle of thy essential Right, behold, O God, in Submission to thy holy Will, and because thou requirest it, I offer myself to all the Obligations of this Day, I undertake all in Obedience to thy Direction, and beg thy Blessing may attend me in all my Under-



Undertakings. And because the End of the whole Creation is thy Glory ; and not only I, but all that I am to do, is a Part of the Creation, therefore I offer both myself, and all the Actions of this Day, to thy Honour ; desiring so to live this Day, that I may be as a Sacrifice of sweet Savour before thee, and thou, the supreme Lord, mayest be glorified in me, thy Creature.

To accomplish this, I propose to do nothing this Day, but what thy holy Will seems to demand of me, according to the Order of Providence, and the Obligations of my State, in which thou hast placed me. And as for all Things which are displeasing to thee, I resolve, through thy Grace, to avoid them, and to resist all Inclinations that lead me to them.

But because I am sensible of my own great Weakness, and of the many Ways in which I every Day offend thee ; therefore I earnestly implore thy Assistance, for the good Government of all my Passions, and likewise of all the Faculties, both of Soul and Body ; that I may be watchful against all evil Inclinations, and renounce all the Appearances of Sin. Help me, O blessed Lord, in this, and so strengthen me by thy Grace, that I may stand resolute against all Temptations, ill Customs, and Persuasions ; that I may give thy Will the Preference to all the sinful Flatteries of the World and Self-love, and that nothing may be able to draw me into Sin.

Give me thy Grace likewise, that I may not neglect, but lay hold of all the Opportunities of doing Good that shall offer themselves this Day ; and also Patience to bear whatever Troubles shall be, this Day, my Exercise. In these, and all other my Necessities, be thou, O merciful God, my Helper, that I may employ this Addition, which thou giest me, of my Life, to thy Glory ; and as I come every Day nearer to the End of my Life, so I am every Day come nearer to the great End for which I was created, that is, the Possession of thee, my Lord and my God.

For the Heads of Families.

Another for such as are streightened in Time.

INTO thy Care and Protection, O Father Almighty, I recommend myself, as of myself being nothing, and having my whole Dependance on thee. Accompany me, I beseech thee, this Day, and by thy Grace preserve me from all, whatever is displeasing to thee, that, the Continuance of my Life being thy Mercy to me, I may not offend thee in my own Gifts.

Let the same Grace, O God, enable me in the Performance of all the Duties of this Day, that neither Sloth, Self-love, or ill Company may occasion in me any Omission; but that I be faithful in them, and perform them all in the Spirit of a Christian, that is, to thy Glory.

Let it be thy Mercy to me, to avoid all Occasions of Sin, and to strengthen me in such Dangers as are unavoidable. Preserve me likewise from all other Misfortunes and ill Accidents, and let not the Devil, in any Kind, have Power over me. O God, this one Thing I ask of thee; That thou leave me not to myself, but that, by the Help of thy Grace, I may live this Day as a Christian, to thy Glory, and my own everlasting Good.

For a Master or Mistress of a Family.

IMPLORE thy Mercy, O God, for my Direction and Help this Day, that I may duly perform every Obligation belonging to my State. Thou art sovereign Lord of the whole World, and I am only thy Deputy in this little Sphere, in which thou hast placed me; grant therefore, I beseech thee, that as I act by thy Commission, so I may have thy Assistance, both for considering in all Things what is thy Will, and for faithfully performing whatever thou hast left me in Charge.

Grant me, O Lord, the Spirit of Discretion, that I may discover in all Things what is best to be done; that I may so manage both my Words and Actions, as never to provoke Mischief, but to answer the Obligations which thou hast laid upon me.

Grant

Grant me the Spirit of Fidelity, that I may be faithful in taking Care of what, under thee, I have in Charge; that nothing may suffer through my Neglect, Idleness, Prodigality, or ill Management; but that I may perform all with Diligence, Industry, and a Solitude for doing well, and make a Conscience of doing so.

Give me the Spirit of Moderation, that Passion may have no Influence on my Words or Actions; that I may bear all the Provocations, Trouble, and Burthen of the Day with Patience; that I may reprove without Anger, command without Imperiousness, require Service without Cruelty, have Compassion on such Pailings, as are rather Weakness than Neglect; and shew a Tenderness to all under my Charge, as knowing that both they and I have one Master in Heaven, who will call all to an Account, and has no Respect of Persons.

Give me, O Lord, a Love for my Duty, that there may be my Delight, where my Obligations call me, And whatever Inclinations thou seest in me, which draw me from the Business of my State, all these, I beseech thee, O God, powerfully to suppress, and let me never want thy Grace to stand against them. For how unhappy must I be if I am governed by Inclination, and not by Duty!

Grant likewise, O Lord, that I may keep out of my Doors all Kind of Extravagance and Excess; let no Sort of Disorder find Encouragement here, that while I profess thy Name, my House may be sacred to thee, and not be polluted with Prophanations, Riots, and Sacrifices to the Devil. For this End, grant, I beseech thee, that I may be a zealous Observer of good Discipline, and be ever watchful against all undue Liberties: And that all may go well, may I be, at all Times, and in all Things, solicitous to give good Example, since thus only I am to expect thy Blessing.

Help me, O Lord, in all other Particulars; for, behold, my Charge is great and difficult, and I am weak, subject to many Overfights, and easily drawn from my Duty. But since my Weaknesses are all known

to thee, who hast put this Trust into my Hands, I hope thou wilt give me both Light and Grace to perform all in such a Manner, as may be acceptable to thee.

Suffer me not to be unjust to any, in denying or neglecting just Debts, much less in detaining the Wages of the hired Servant or Labourer; because this is an Oppression which thou hast threatened with the greatest Severity, and I cannot expect thy Blessing if I wilfully incur this Guilt.

Deliver me from all immoderate Solicitude, and let no Excess of worldly Care take off my Heart from my greatest Concern of Eternity.

Grant that I may not connive at what ought to be reproved, nor let those under my Care be unprovided of what is necessary for their spiritual Good.

In all my Duties assist me, O God, that I may duly satisfy whatever depends upon my Care. In thy Name I begin this Day; I undertake the Concerns and Labours of it, in Submission to thy holy Will; I offer myself to all the Troubles of it to comply with the Order of thy Providence; I most humbly beseech thee to grant me Patience, that I may bear them as a Disciple of Christ. I beg thy Blessing upon all I am to do or suffer this Day, and I offer all to thy Glory. O God, go along with me, and help me according to my Necessities, both now and for ever,

ASSIST me, O God, this Day in discharging my Duty to my Children, I acknowledge the Difficulty of the Charge, and the infinite Indiscretions or ill Managements to which I am subject; and therefore I most humbly beg thy Help.

Help me, O God, that I may do all Things this Day as may most contribute to their Good. Give me that true Christian Discretion, that I may see what to deny and what to grant them; and suffer not, I beseech thee, either Passion, ill Humour, or Fondness so far to prevail with me, as either to deny them any reasonable Encouragement, or to yield to them in any Thing

Thing that will be to their Prejudice, either of Body or Mind.

Give me Light and Strength of Mind in this great Affair, that no Part of Christian Education may be wanting to my Children, through any Neglect or Fault of mine, that so they may grow up thy faithful Servants; and if they should prove otherwise, that I may have this Comfort, at least, under so great a Misfortune, that their Ruin has been no Fault of mine.

But for this, O God, how much do I want of thy Direction and Help! How many Ways shall I fail in this Duty, if thou, O Lord, dost not teach me? Assist me therefore, I beseech thee, under all my Weakness, and let not my Unworthiness shut up the Hands of thy Goodness against me, and leave me to be the unhappy Occasion of my Children's Ruin.

That I may have no Part in this, let it be the Effect of thy Grace in me, to give them good Example in all Things that belong to a Christian Life, and with a daily Watchfulness to take Care, that nothing be said or done before them which may instruct them in Evil.

For the same End, I beg thy Grace, O God, that I may be ever careful in keeping a strict Discipline in my Family, and banishing whatever is disorderly; that so, being the Head of a Family I may answer my Obligation to all that are in it; and by a constant Regularity prevent those many Sins and other Mischiefs which are inseparable from an undisciplined and disorderly Life.

Grant likewise, O God, that I may be wanting in no Care, for the comfortable Subsistence of my Children in this Life; but that I may be industrious in making a due Provision for them. I confess it to be often the Occasion of Ruin, both as to Soul and Body, for Youth to be left to struggle with Necessity; and that it is unnatural in Parents thus to expose their Children. Wherefore I most earnestly beg of thee, most blessed Lord, to (prevent in me or) take from me all Manner of Prodigality and ill Management, and to grant me that true Government of all my Inclinations, that I may no Ways concur in making my Children unhappy.

Let neither the Love of Gaming, Intemperance, ill Company, Entertainments, Vanity, or Sports ; let no Neglect, Projects, or any Indiscretion so far prevail with me, as to be the Occasion of bringing Mifery upon my Family. What can an Enemy do worse than this ? And what an unnatural Parent then must I be, if I take this Part upon me, and even make that my Entertainment which must make those miserable, whom by the strictest Duty I am bound to support and comfort ! Deliver me, O merciful God, from being thus wretched, and suffer me not, I beseech thee, to fall into this Sin, which as thou thyself hast already judged and published it, makes a Christian worse than a Heathen.

Preserve me likewise, O God, from running into the other Extreme, of preparing my Children for Unhappiness, by being too solicitous to make them great. Rather, O Lord, let me be contented with what is moderate ; more desirous to put my Children in Circumstances for living good Christians, than to appear great : And never let me disable myself from doing Good in my Generation, upon the Project of making unreasonable Additions to their Fortune.

Direct me, O God, in all other Particulars, that can contribute to the Christian Education of my Children, and help me in discerning and avoiding all that can be injurious to them. Take from me all hurtful Partiality, which does Mischief on both Sides ; and no less with the Injustice of its Favours, than its Frowns ; and grant me such Moderation, as never to be tired in the Endeavours for doing them Good ; and never to give them such Discouragements or unreasonable Uneasiness, as to put them upon rash Methods, for the Remedy of the Trouble they find at Home.

Remember, O Father Almighty, that thou art a Father to them ; and since I am so weak, who am deputed by thee, to have the immediate Care and Government of them, mercifully supply by thy Goodness whatever is wanting in me. Let thy Grace always attend them, preserving them from Evil, and directing them to all Good. Confirm them against the Corruption

Corruption of the World and of Sin; deliver them from all Effects of a vain and inconstant Mind; give them Discretion to avoid all Snares, and to choose that which is best; and in all their Undertakings be thou a Blessing to them, this Day and for ever, that living here thy faithful Children, they may come at length to that Inheritance which Christ has purchased for them. *Amen.*

For a Husband or Wife.

O GOD, who hast ordained this State, in which I am engaged, give me Grace to comply with all the Obligations of it, and help me to perform them in such a Manner, that in every one of them I may shew I have a Faith in thee, and am not an Unbeliever.

Preserve my Love undefiled; let it not be governed by any Passion, but be wholly subject to Reason; to that Reason which is governed by thee. Preserve in me this Love, which is a Duty, and let this help to carry me with Comfort thro' all the Obligations and Difficulties of my State.

Give me, O God, a true, solid Discretion, that I may know how to manage all Circumstances for the best.

Give me a true Love for Peace, and such a discreet Compliance, as to resign my own Inclinations and Ways, for keeping it.

Give me a true Humility and Patience, that I may submit to and bear all, in the Manner as thy Apostle requires.

Furnish me, O God, with all other Helps, that whatever my Difficulties be I may still go on with Chearfulness, satisfying the Duties of my State, and never so far yield to any Weakness, Impatience, or ill Humour, as to weaken, much less break the Bond which thou hast sanctified.

For this End, O God, may I at all Times remember, but especially when inclined to any Uneasiness, how religiously this Bond ought to be kept; since it has no less than thee, my God, for its Author; since thou hast laid thy strictest Commands for so keeping it,

and I have tied myself to this Obligation by a most solemn Vow, undertaken in thy Presence; having both God and Man Witnesses of the Engagement I have made.

This being my Case, grant, O God, I may be ever mindful of this my great Obligation; may the greatness of it make me afraid of transgressing it; may thy Commands sweeten all the Difficulties of it; and when Impatience begins to raise Disquiets, may I resolutely suppress them, upon the Reflection, that it is thou, O Lord, who hast commanded me to be patient under the Uneasiness of my State, and I have thee for the Witness and Reward of whatever I patiently suffer in Obedience to thy Will, and in Compliance with the Promise I have made.

Upon this same Consideration, may I at all Times have a Sense how great my Unworthiness, nay, how great my Sin must be, if after such strict Engagements I let every trifling Occasion, every little Humour, or slight Contradiction, be enough to raise Disputes, fill all with Heats, and break the Bond of Peace. For since I ought to have more Patience than this with every Neighbour, and every Quarrel, upon such inconsiderable Grounds, must be set down as sinful, much more must it be so here, where the Obligations of Love and Peace are so much stricter.

Grant, therefore, O merciful Lord, that my Patience may be proportioned to my Duty; and that I may be here more watchful against all Disputes, where thou hast laid the strictest Command of keeping Peace. In order to this, help me, I beseech thee, in governing my inward Motions, my Passions, and my Words; help me in bearing what is not agreeable to my own Inclination or Way, in passing by ordinary Provocations, and in contriving and using all Means of Moderation and Sweetness, for gaining such Points, as there is Reason to gain. And as for giving any Sort of Provocation, grant me, O God, such Government of myself as never to do this; but to choose rather to deny myself, than to give any Occasion of Misunderstanding or Difference.

In

In all other Particulars be thou a Helper to me ; Thou, who knowest all my Circumstances, assist me according to my Weakness and my Wants. Give me Grace, I beseech thee, that I may never do any thing contrary to the Faith I have given, nor take any such Ways, as must be either injurious or afflicting to those to whom I ought to be a Comfort. And as for all the Duties and Difficulties of my State, grant I may be faithful and united under them ; doing and suffering whatever comes to my Lot, with such a true Submission to thy Will, that both in Peace and Trouble, in easy and uneasy Ways, I may remember to make the best Use of what is thy Pleasure or Permission, and in all Extremes still labour to work out my Salvation.

For Widows..

O GOD, the Disposer of all Things, who hast been pleased to bring me into this State, give me Grace this Day, that I may bear all the Troubles of it with Patience, make use of all the Advantages of it with Christian Prudence, and with Fidelity perform all the Duties belonging to it.

Deliver me, I beseech thee, from all Lightness and Indiscretion, and so mercifully direct me, as to do nothing that may give Offence, or be unbecoming my State. Rather, O Lord, as thou knowest it best for me, teach me to be a Widow indeed. Teach me to improve the Opportunity thou hast given me for securing to myself a happy Eternity.

I must confess, O God, my Circumstances are such as have a great Advantage in them, in order to everlasting Life. I have seen what the World is, and am convinced of its Vanities ; I have had earthly Comforts, and having found their Uncertainty, see there is nothing in this World that can afford a secure Rest to a Soul : And now, upon this Experience, my Heart is at Liberty for seeking those better Goods which alone can make a Soul happy, and being above the Reach of Time, are both solid and unchangeable.

Grant, O Lord, I beseech thee, I may make the best Use of this Liberty, in turning my Heart wholly upon

upon seeking those everlasting Goods : And as long as I shall abide here in this Pilgrimage, give me Grace to employ my Time in such Exercises of Piety, Charity, and solid Devotion, as may engage thy Mercy to me, and be the most effectual for coming to the Possession of that Happiness which I desire.

And one daily Business, O God, may it be of my whole Life, to consider my past Sins, Follies, Vanities, and Extravagancies, and to study for the Time to come, how to make some Recompence for the ill Example I have given ; and thus follow the Advice of thy Apostle, in being now as much serviceable to Righteousness, as formerly I have done Disservice to it.

In this Method, O God, of a true Conversion, may I now every Day give Encouragement to the Moderation of the Gospel, in an humble Dress, in a frugal Table, in a retired Life, in a regular Discipline, in slender Attendance, and in cutting off from every Part of my past Life whatever I can apprehend, with impartial Reason, to have been the Indulgence of a corrupt Appetite, vicious Self-love, or a vain, extravagant World. Thus may I labour to do Right to the Gospel, for the Injury I have done in joining with the World against it, and giving Authority to such Ways, as are contrary to what is prescribed there to the Followers of Jesus. This, O blessed Lord, I must acknowledge a Duty ; for since Justice obliges me to make the best Satisfaction I can, for the Injury I have at any Time done to others ; by a stricter Tye of Justice, I must be certainly bound to make all the Satisfaction I am able, for the Injury I have done to the Gospel, to the Souls of my Neighbours, and to the Blood of Jesus, inasmuch as I have espoused a Cause contrary or prejudicial to those great Purposes of Mercy, for which Jesus shed his sacred Blood.

And may this same Justice carry me on, O God, for doing Right to my own Soul. As far as I have injured it by indulging immoderate Sleep, may I now recompence this Wrong, by being more watchful. As far as I have injured it by accustoming it to Vanity, to Idleness, or dangerous Entertainments ; may I now

I now make Restitution, by retrenching all that is reproveable in these Ways, and lead it on in the Ways of an humble, active, and exemplary Life. As many Hours as I have given to Folly, may I now give to Prayer and other Exercises, which are for making Approaches towards thee. May I endeavour by Charity to make Amends for all that I have sinfully, idly, or prodigally misspent. By Recollection, and the Practices of an universal Charity, may I make Attonement for all the Time I have lost; and thus in all other Particulars may I observe the Rules of Justice, and industriously repair whatever Prejudice my Soul has suffered thro' my Fault.

Hear my Prayer, O God; and now from this Day may the whole Method of my Life be regulated by the Gospel; may I study to improve my present Circumstances in order to eternal Life; strengthen me against all Dangers; let thy heavenly Light direct me for avoiding Snares; let Prudence have the Government of whatever belongs to me. And thus, O God, may my Loss be my Advantage, and under thy Protection may I find greater Comforts than what the World affords. Accompany me, I beseech thee O God, and let thy Grace help me under all my Weakness.

For those who live a single Life.

O BLESSED Redeemer, who both by thyself and thy Apostles hast commended this State, assist me with thy holy Grace this Day, that I may duly consider the Advantages of it, and likewise make Use of them, in order to eternal Life.

Direct me, I beseech thee, this Day, that I may avoid all Snares; and give me Discretion, not to expose myself to any such Circumstances, as can be either hurtful to me, or unbecoming. Let this, O God, be thy Mercy to me, because of my great Infirmitiy.

Help me likewise, O merciful Lord, in seeking and obtaining that Perfection which is peculiar to this State. Thy Apostle has told me, that the unmarried Person *carrieth for the Things of the Lord,* and to be *holy*

14 *For those who live a single Life.*

holy both in Body and Spirit ; and is in the best Circumstances for attending on the Lord without Distraction.

These are the greatest Advantages that can be desired in this Life. For being created for Eternity, what can be more desirable than to be in the best Circumstances of caring and providing for Eternity ? And our greatest Danger of Miscarriage being from the Distractions of this World, what better State can be proposed, than that which gives Opportunity of attending upon the Lord without Distraction.

Wherefore I render thee Thanks, O blessed Lord, for the present happy Circumstances of my Life ; and I beseech thee so to help me by thy Grace, that I may make use of them in such a Manner, as to find the good Effects in my Soul, for which thy Apostle gives it the Preference to all other States.

Grant, O Jesus, that in this Liberty which I have, I may turn my Heart to the seeking of the Things that are above, that I may learn to despise what the World most admires, and have my Heart and Desires as much disengaged from its Satisfactions, Follies, and Vanities, as the Condition of my State is.

Grant, that being at Liberty from those great Engagements, which are attended with endless Solitude, and enslave the Minds of Men to the Earth, I may make a good Use of this my Privilege, in seeking and serving thee, my God, with greater Freedom of Spirit. While others, therefore, are busy about the World, have their Minds dissipated with Care and Confusion ; while their Concern for Earth is ever breaking in with Violence upon their most recollected Thoughts may it be my Comfort to enjoy thee in the peaceable Retirement of an undisturbed Mind, and to rejoice in the little Share I have in a troublesome World, which in its general Corruption is an Enemy to thee, and in its most lawful Concerns is a Hindrance to all those Exercises by which we are to come to the Possession of thee.

This Freedom therefore, O God, I acknowledged to be a great Blessing, which ought to bring forth good Fruit in me : I confess it to be a Talent of Value, for which

which I shall be called to Account, if it be not improved to my eternal Good and thy Glory. Help me therefore, I beseech thee, in satisfying this Obligation: Suffer me not to neglect this thy Gift, which is so improvable; but so direct and strengthen me by thy Grace, that, having chosen thee for my Spouse, I may leave all for thee, I may love thee with all my Heart, I may desire thee with all my Soul, I may adore thee with all my Strength; and in this Method of Charity become holy both in Body and Spirit.

Affist me, O merciful Redeemer, in thus improving my Talent; because if, under this Privilege of my State, I am not thus industrious; if I either engage my Heart in the Follies of the World, or am conceited of the vain Opinion of myself, or live a careless, tepid, or slothful Life, I can expect nothing better than to be shut out with the unprofitable Servant. This thou, O Lord, hast taught me, in declaring that there are foolish Virgins as well as wise; that those are foolish who permit careless Delays in providing for Eternity; and that such, as are thus foolish, shall be shut out, and hear that Answer of Terror from the Bridegroom, *I know ye not.*

O Jesus, suffer me not to be one of those; suffer me not to be thus foolish, in neglecting the great Opportunities thou hast given me for working out my Salvation; but let the Method of my Life be answerable to the Conveniencies of my State. Help me in being wise; help me in providing Oil in my Lamp, and in standing prepared for thy Summons. O Jesus, to thy Protection I recommend myself; I desire my Life may be sanctified in thy Service; I desire to become a Sacrifice to thee. Affist me, I beseech thee, in the Execution of my Desires; support me under all my Weakness; defend me against all Snares, both of the Devil and of the World, and of my own Corruption; preserve me from Indiscretion and Rashness, and from all the Dangers of a light and inconstant Mind; secure me against ill Advice; take from me all Fondness of whatever flatters the Senses, and of all earthly Goods; let me admire nothing that is vain and empty; give me a Dread of all that is dangerous;

ous; and let the great and prevailing Object of my Love, Affections and Desires, be in thee alone. Thus, O God, may I live, thus may I die. Grant this, O Jesus, thro' the Merits of thy sacred Passion: Hear my Prayer, and make me thy true Disciple.

*For such as are in their youthful Years, or Others, who
live an idle Life.*

O GOD, here in thy Presence I acknowledge my great Weakness, which exposes me to many Indiscretions, Follies, and Sins; and I confess my Danger to be such, that I can have no Safety but from thy Protection. Take me therefore, I beseech thee, this Day into thy Care; prevent in me the Mischiefs of all my own InfirmitieS, by thy heavenly Grace, and let no Evil have Power over me.

Moderate in me, O God, the Love of the World, and of all its entertaining Vanities. Let Faith have that continual Influence upon my Soul as to repute the World, with all its admired Charms, no better than Vanity and Affliction of Spirit. Let my Heart be ever under this Conviction, that whatever I admire upon Earth, whatever I desire, is all deceitful and treacherous; that it has no lasting Being, paffes away like a Shadow, is hastening to Corruption, and shall soon end in Rottenness or Dust.

Hence, O God, instead of admiring, may I learn to despise what, in itself, is thus contemptible; and by this Contempt endeavour to correct the Perverseness of my own Inclinations, and break the Force of the most violent Assaults. Hence, O God, may I begin to condemn my own Folly and Blindness, in placing my Satisfaction in Things so perishable, base, and superficial; may I blush at my own Madness, and be confounded to see for what poor Things I throw away my Soul, and forsake thee, my God.

Ah, my God! How long shall I go on thus blind and mad! How long shall I go on with the Faith of Eternity, and lay aside the Concern of this, to run after Butterflies and Smoke! I was created for an everlasting Life to come, and for the Possession of thee, my God: For this End I was brought into this World, that,

that, in this short Life, I might work out my Salvation, and prepare for the Hour of my Death, when I shall be called to enter into Eternity. And what is it I do? O my God! What is it I do? I am studying every Day to please myself, and am earnest in seeking present Satisfaction; but as for preparing for Death and Eternity, these are the Things I least think of; and when I do think of them, I find I am every Day less prepared for them.

For what is my Life but a Life of Idleness and Vanity; a Life of Sloth and Self-love; a Life of Appetite, Sleep, Dressing, Gaming, Divertisements, and unprofitable Company; a Life spent in courting the World and myself? This is my innocent Part; and what are all my Sins? And is this the Way of preparing to appear before thee, my God, and entering into Eternity!

O Jesus! thou hast told me the Fate of the unprofitable Servant, and of the Tree found without Fruit; and what then must my Expectation be, if now I should be summoned into Eternity? What can I expect, but to be an everlasting Companion of Devils, and to be subject to the endless Rack, of having the immoderate Love of Creatures joined with an eternal Separation from them.

O God, I see the unreasonable Folly of my Life, and I confess it before thee; I see myself miserable and lost, if I go on in this Way; if I do not labour to renounce all my Evils, and begin to be a new Creature. Help me therefore, O God, in this Task, and though rendered very difficult, through my own Fault, yet grant, I beseech thee, I may undertake it without Delay; that I may begin this very Day; that I may pursue it with Resolution, carry it on with Courage, and finish it with Comfort.

I know I am very weak for so great a Work; but, O God, thy Grace is sufficient for me. Thy Grace is able to carry me through all my Difficulties; and thou hast manifested both thy Power and Goodness, in great Numbers of Souls, who have been drawn out of the Depth of Sin, and become faithful in thy Service. Let this same Mercy therefore teach me also,

also, O God; for it is in this alone I put all my Trust.

For this End I come here a Petitioner this Day, and most humbly beseech thee to work this great Change in my Soul. Change all my Inclinations, O God, and let me no longer have a Value for what is sinful or vain. Let me no longer be bent upon what is sensual, idle, or unprofitable; but give me a Relish, O merciful Lord, of such Exercises as are more becoming the Christian Character, and may be serviceable for my eternal Good.

Quicken my Faith, I beseech thee, that my Desires may be raised above that which is earthly; that I may no more place my Satisfaction in Filth or Folly; that I may not daily gratify my Humour or Senses, to the Ruin of my Soul; that I may not please myself with what is displeasing to thee; that I may not make myself my own Idol, and sacrifice both thy Law and all that belongs to Eternity, to the doing my own Will, in the Accomplishment of my corrupt Desires.

Let there be no more of this, for thou art my God; and as I own it my Duty, so I know it my greatest Interest to serve thee. Confirm me in this Knowledge; and strengthen me in the Practice of it. Give me Grace, I beseech thee, to decline all Occasions of Evil; to avoid ill Company, and to choose such as may be an Instruction to me in Good. Direct me, O God, to such as are proper to advise me in what is best, and help me in following their Advice. Deliver me from all Lightness and Inconstancy of Mind; stand by me in resisting Temptations; take from me all Presumption in my own Strength, and suffer me not through Rashness to run into Danger. *Lastly*, I most humbly beseech thee, O God, to have Regard to my extreme Weakness; and since I must necessarily meet with great Difficulties, Snares, and Temptations in what I now propose, help me, O merciful Father, give me Strength and Courage according to my Necessities, and through thy Grace may I persevere to the End.

For

For young Persons yet under their Parents' Care.

O ETERNAL Father, who hast commanded us to be obedient to our Parents, and made this the first Command of Promise, for our Encouragement, mercifully grant that I may never do any thing contrary to this Precept, but be faithful in the Performance of all that it enjoins, and thus hope to receive the Blessing of thee, my Father in Haven.

Preserve in me, I beseech thee, that Love which is due to my Parents ; and may this have that constant Influence upon me, as to oblige me at all Times to pay them that Respect, Honour, and Obedience as thou, O God, hast commanded me.

Upon this Motive, may I be ever tender of them, and solicitous to please them ; may I be always ready to yield to their Inclinations, to comply with their Ways, and to observe their Orders. For this End, O God, I beseech thee to take from me all Stubbornness, Sourness, Fondness of my own Thoughts and Ways. Let me never contradict them, or so dispute against their Proposals as to make them uneasy ; but in all lawful Things may it be my daily Practice, rather to keep Silence, and deny my own Inclinations, than give them any Trouble, by contending about them.

And as thou, O God, hast put Parents over me, for my Direction and Help ; so may I always make them of my Counsel, consulting with them in all whatever belongs to me. May I never give Ear to any who teach me to undervalue my Parents, or to despise their Advice ; but grant I may be ever afraid of such Proposals, and void those who thus undertake to make me a Rebel against thy express Law, and deprive me of thy Blessing.

Henceforth, O God, I beseech thee, may I be ever under the Protection of thy Grace, so as never to become the Grief of my Parents, by following ill Company, or taking evil Ways, or exposing myself to the Danger of departing from those pious Principles in which they have educated me. No, my God, preserve me, if it be thy blessed Will, from the Sin of bringing

bringing the worst of Afflictions upon my Parents, and becoming their Persecutor: For I must acknowledge, if ever I prove thus unnatural, I must renounce all Hopes in thee, and look upon myself no better than a Reprobate. Help me therefore, O merciful Father, and by thy powerful Grace secure me against this wretched State.

Help me likewise in all other Particulars, that on no Account I may fall under the Character which thou hast given of the Foolish Son, who is *a Grief to his Father, and a Bitterness to her that bare him*. Rather, O God, may I be a Comfort to them, and in all Ways study to be their Support; so to make some Return for all the Care, Trouble, and Love they have had for me. And this may I never omit, even in their old Age, but continue with the Addition of such Relief as they shall want, and lies in my Power to give. I beseech thee, that I may never shew any Impatience at their Infirmities, much less mock at any Weakness to which they may be subject, because this is a Sin against which thou hast declared thy Displeasure.

In this Manner, O God, may I go on all my Life, and never suffer any Change of Circumstances to take me from my Duty. In this one Thing only I desire an Exception; to dissent from my Parents, when they encourage me to any Thing which thou hast forbidden, or forbid me to do what thou hast commanded. In these Cases, I humbly beg thy Grace to be faithful to thee, my heavenly Father, and to choose rather to forsake Father, and Mother, and forfeit all worldly Conveniencies, than to depart from thee; since 'tis only upon this Condition I can be thy Disciple. Help me, O blessed God, and by thy Grace direct me this Day in every Thing belonging to my Duty; and grant that in nothing I may offend my Parents on Earth, nor thee my Father who art in Heaven.

For the Rich.

MOST bountiful Lord, I acknowledge thee my Benefactor, I return thee Thanks for whatever I possess, and I heartily beg thy Grace, that this Day I may make a good Use of whatever Plenty, thro' thy Mercy, I enjoy.

Wherefore I most earnestly beseech thee, that this Day I may so far govern myself; as to spend nothing in favour of any vicious or sinful Inclination, nor suffer any prodigal or extravagant Humour to have the Command of my Purse: Nay one Thing farther I ask, that I may be deaf to all the Demands of expensive Vanity, Gaming, Appetite, and Idleness; and put a Stop to all those Ways by which I have hitherto misspent what thou hast entrusted with me.

O God, how great has been my Sin in this way! and what ought my Confusion to be, when I look back and see how little I have corresponded with the Designs of thy Goodness, in the Plenty which thou hast deposited in my Hands! since I can scarce say with Truth, that I have ever duly considered the Account I am to give thee of what I have received, but have inconsiderately left it to the Disposal of as many Passions or Humours as I have had to call for it; as if to feed and satisfy those had been one principal End for which it had been given me.

Unhappy Sinner that I am! who can number the many Sins I have fallen into by this my Prodigality and ill Management! How shall I appear, when I am called to give an Account of my Stewardship! How shall I make Atonement for this intolerable Waste of the Goods of my Lord, and for turning his Favours to the Service of Idleness, Vanity, and Sin!

I see plainly the Injustice and Impiety of what I have done; I confess my Ingratitude; I own the unhappy State of my Soul thro' my manifold Sins; and I most heartily beseech thee to fill my Heart with such a seasonable Confusion for my Folly, as from this Moment never to think of it but with Horror, and never more to suffer the Return of it.

Teach

Teach me therefore, O God, to consider the Use I am to make of what I have received from thee ; that I am not the Master of it, but only the Steward ; that I am to give an Account to thee of what thou hast left with me in Trust : Imprint this Principle, I beseech thee, and fix it immovable in my Heart, that I may no more sacrifice what I have in my Care to Inclination and to the World ; but bring all my Expences to be examined, how far they are agreeable to thy Will, and answer those Ends for which thou hast deposited such Plenty in my Hands.

I know it is thy Will I should be ready to supply my own Necessities, and of those who belong to me : Thou allowest me to provide for the common Conveniences of Life, and for all that Health and prudent Decency requires ; as likewise to make a Provision for their comfortable Well-being, who have received their Being from me. So far, O God, thou wilt receive in Accounts.

Besides this, I have thy express Orders for supplying, out of my Plenty, the Necessities of such as are in Want. For this I have thy Command, and, as those who observe it not (*who feed not the Hungry, nor clothe the Naked, &c.*) are to be placed on the left Hand of the Judge, and condemned eternally ; so those who obey thy Orders in giving Alms, have in this a powerful Means of finding Mercy with thee.

Grant therefore, I beseech thee, I may ever have this Command before my Eyes, and be always mindful how very much my Eternity depends on it ; my Salvation on the Observance, and Damnation on the Neglect of it. Grant I may ever have Compassion for such as are in Distress, and look upon my Plenty as that which thou hast left with me for their Help ; and yet much more for my own, whilst in giving Relief to them for thy Sake, and in Obedience to thy Commands, I lay up for myself a Treasure in Heaven, which will be much more my Comfort, than all that I hoard up here unnecessarily or spend unprofitably.

O God, this is a great Mercy, that in the good Use of such Dross, thou hast provided me with such effectual

tual Means for making me eternally happy. Grant now I beseech thee, this one Petition, that for the Time that yet remains of my Life, I may be so wise as to make this good Use of it. Grant me this true Wisdom and Strength of Mind, that I may no more let Prodigality or Intemperance, Vanity or Idleness, devour what belongs to the Poor; that I may not make that the unnecessary Ornament of my House, or cloathing of my Walls, which, if applied to cloathing the Naked, might help to set me on the right Hand of the Judge: That I may not give to Curiosity what might be the Comfort of the Fatherless and Widow; nor to a luxuriant Table that which might give Life to such as are perishing for want of Necessaries; nor to idle Entertainments what might be the Support of sinking Families.

Too great, O God, has been my Guilt in this manifold Waste; but now mercifully hear me, and let it be so no more; let me now lay up for Heaven, who have wasted so much upon Dust and Earth. Let me now every Day consider what I can spare, and not consult with Vanity, Idleness, or Folly upon this Point; since very much may be spared, where these pretend Want. By these I have been hitherto deceived; may I therefore now be afraid of whatever they suggest, and be more serious, where Eternity is concerned, than to take these for my Guides who never knew the Way to Heaven, but have led Millions into Hell. Far be it from me, O God, to take such for my Advisers.

Deliver me likewise from all other Snares, from Covetousness and the Love of Riches. These are great Judgments, and I have thy Word for it, that they lead into great Temptations, into hurtful Desires, and drown Men in Perdition. Preserve me therefore, and according to my Weakness, which is known to thee, mercifully afford me Help. I cannot but fear, since my Circumstances are declared to be so dangerous, and He, who is to be the Judge of all Men, has solemnly published the great Difficulty there is of Salvation for such as are rich. Help me therefore, O God, and as thou knowest thy Grace to be necessary

sary for me, so afford me Help ; I see how easy it is to abuse thy Gifts ; I have Custom to incline me to it ; Authority to encourage me in it ; Example and Prescription to plead for it ; and the whole World, like a Torrent, carrying me on in this sinful Practice ; and my only Help, for standing against this Power, is from thy Grace.

Wherefore I beseech thee give me this Grace, that in the Use of Money I may observe such Rules as come nearest to thy holy Will, and to the Gospel which I profess ; for thus only shall I be able to give an Account of what I have received. And as for the World, if it approves not the Method, let it pass its Censures as it pleases ; for here I declare my Sentiments, and heartily desire they may be always mine : I had rather be the Subject of its Reproaches, for so doing well, than have its Applauses for complying with such unwarrantable Ways as it better approves.

For all such Professions as live by Gain.

OGOD who, in Punishment of Sin, hast commanded us to take Pains for a Livelihood, give a Blessing to my Endeavours this Day, and grant that what I undertake may be attended with Success.

Let me live this Day in thy holy Fear, and may thy Grace so direct me as to do nothing that is unlawful, upon the Prospect of making any Advantage by it. Let no Desire of Gain so prevail with me, as to propose or do any Thing that is unjust ; since whatever my Gain be, I shall certainly provoke thy Displeasure, and be a Loser by it.

Grant I may be faithful in whatever I undertake in Behalf of my Neighbour ; I may exactly perform all Covenants and Contracts, and never contrive Ways to encrease his Charges, or to be a Gainer by his Loss.

Give me such powerful Graces as never to defraud, over-reach, or do Wrong to my Neighbour, nor to use any such Ways by which he may be imposed upon and led into Deceit. Thou hast forbiddon all this to thy Followers, declared it to be an Abomination to thee, and that thou wilt be the Avenger of all such

as do these Things ; for that *He that doth Wrong shall receive for the Wrong he hath done, and there is no respect of Persons.* Nay, thou hast said, that those who do wrong and defraud are unrighteous, and, *that the Unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.*

Deliver me therefore, I beseech thee, from following such Ways ; for what Comfort can there be in such Gain, which draws thy certain Judgements upon me, and shuts me out from the Kingdom of Heaven ? What will it profit me, if I gain the whole World, and lose my Soul ? O God, what a sad Exchange then will it be, if, for leaving a little more behind me when I die, I lose thee, my God, for all Eternity ! To what Purpose is my Faith, my Hope, my Prayer, and all my Profession of Religion, if I go on in such a Way, which thou hast declared to be the Way of Damnation ! O merciful God, deliver me from all such Blindness and Delusion.

And here, O blessed Lord, I beseech thee, let me hearken to no deceitful Arguments, in a Case where thou hast spoken so very plain. Let not Education prevail ; let neither Example, Authority, Custom, nor general Practice, have any Power over me : For what are all these against thy Command ? These cannot make a Thing lawful which thou hast forbidden ; they cannot dispense with thy Laws, but with their Loss, who accept the Dispensation. And can these save me, if, for my Disobedience to thy Laws, thou shuttest me out of Heaven ?

O God, I confess they can do nothing, and therefore they ought not to be a Warrant for doing what thou forbiddest ; they are only Pretexts to serve their Turn who are willing to be deceived ; and therefore I most heartily beg thy Grace, that I may not give Ear to them. No, my God, be thou ever a God to me ; let me at all Times hear thy Voice, observe thy Precepts, follow thy Law, and renounce all that which undertakes to lead me on in Ways which thou hast forbidden, or promises Security amidst all thy Threats ; since, if I renounce not this, I must in fact renounce thee.

Wherefore, O merciful Lord, hear this my Prayer, and deliver me not up to Blindness, or to a reprobate Sense. Let me rather resign all worldly Advantages than seek them this Way. Let me rather be contented with a moderate Gain, a strait Fortune, a poor Being, than seek to mend my Condition by unjust Means. Nay, my God, give me a Spirit to submit to Inconveniences, to struggle with Necessities, to venture a total Ruin, rather than use unlawful Ways for fencing myself against these Mischiefs. Give me this Spirit, I beseech thee O Lord, that I may never take one Step farther in any worldly Business than thy Law will give me Leave. And, if in following this Method, thou shalt so please that I fall into Trouble, thy Will be done: I shall have this Comfort, at least, of suffering for Justice; and I think it much better to suffer all Kinds of Persecution upon this Account, than go to the Devil for Help.

This I declare to be my Judgement, and I beg thy Assistance, that I may always be governed by it in all I do. Thus, O God, may I do this Day. Help me in what I now propose, and let no Desire of Gain, nor Fear of worldly Inconvenience, nor the greatest Opportunities of Injustice, have Power to carry me against my Duty. Give me Strength and Courage to stand the Ground which Justice prescribes, and let thy Blessing accompany me in all I do.

For Servants, and such as live by their Labour.

IT was thou, O God, the supreme Judge of the World, who didst ordain Labour to be the Punishment of Sin, requiring of all the Children of Adam, that they should eat their Bread in the Sweat of their Brow. From thy Hand I accept the Punishment, and confess it to be just; and as for that Part which I am to undergo this Day, I submit to it with a willing Mind, acknowledging it to be due to my Sins; and I hope, as it is thy Appointment, so it will likewise find Acceptance with thee.

It being just then that Offenders should be punished, I own myself a great Offender; and upon this Consideration I offer myself to whatever Difficulties I shall

shall meet with this Day : I offer myself to the Difficulties of my Work ; to the Reproofs of thoſe that are over me, whether just or unjust ; to all the Uneasiness of their Commands, Humours, and Ways ; to the Provocations from Equals, and to whatever other Troubles shall happen to me this Day : To all these I offer myself, because I know myself a Sinner ; and I look upon all these as the Execution of thy Justice, O God, against an Offender. But then, O sovereign Lord, I heartily beg thy Grace, that I may overcome all my natural Impatience, Passion, Fretfulness, and ill Humour, and receive all the Difficulties of this Day with the Humility and Patience of an Offender, who knows his Sins to deserve far greater Punishment than what he at present suffers.

In this Manner I desire to undergo all the Uneasiness of this Day ; but help me thou, O merciful God, and give me Patience, as my Circumstances shall require, that so I may have the Comfort of suffering as a Christian, and not as a Heathen who has no Faith in thee.

That I may obtain thy Assistance and Blessing, behold to thee I offer all whatever I am to do or suffer this Day. I undertake it in Obedience to thy Will, who requireſt it of me. I acknowledge thee for my Lord and Master ; and tho' I have thy Creatures over me, yet I have thy Commands for what I do ; and I serve, not as serving the Eyes of Men, but as doing the Will of thee, my God.

Being thus engaged in thy Service, I depend on thee for whatever Help I shall want, for performing the Duties of my Place, and supporting the Difficulties of it ; for I have a Confidence thou wilt help those that serve thee.

Grant me therefore, O God, this necessary Grace, that I may be faithful and exact in performing whatever Obligations belong to the Station in which I am ; that nothing which I have undertaken may be omitted through my Forgetfulness or Want of Care ; that nothing may be lost or injured through my Neglect ; that I may be wanting in no Part, either through Sloth, or the Love of Ease or Sleep ; that I may not

waste any thing, nor spend or employ what belongs to others, but with the Consent or Permission of those who are Owners of it ; that I may not make any Advantage of what is not mine, but as far as is permitted ; much less contrive to gain by their Loss whom I serve : And in this, O God, let not the Love of Interest, or the Example of others, or common Practice, prevail with me for doing what is unjust.

In these Particulars and all others be thou my Helper, O God ; and this not only when I have the Eye of others over me, to witness what I do (which is only Eye-service, and can have no Acceptance with thee) but I most earnestly implore thy Grace, that I may make a Conscience of all I do ; that I may do all *in Singleness of Heart, as unto Christ*: Not with Eye-service, as Men-pleasers, but as the Servant of Christ, doing the Will of God from the Heart ; with good Will doing Service, as to the Lord, and not to Men. This Grace bestow, O God, on thy Servant, that I may be faithful and careful on all Occasions. Let it be enough for me that I may have thy Eye always over me, to witness what I do ; and, on this Motive, may I be ever solicitous to perform my Duty, though I have no other to reprove me, or to call me to an Account.

Grant likewise, O Lord, that I may shew a ready Obedience to their Commands who are over me, and comply with Chearsfulness, even when they are discomposed with Passion, or give such Orders as are not pleasing to me.. In such Occasions may I so govern both my Words and Behaviour as to shew no Dislike, ill Humour, and much less Stubbornness ; and upon no Account may I ever revile or speak evil of them behind their Backs.

If they command what is sinful, or require my Concurrence in what is displeasing to thee, give me Grace to be faithful to thee, and to let no worldly Convenience or Interest persuade me to such an unchristian Compliance. Rather let me lose all Advantages of this Life, than purchase them by doing what is sinful.

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Let thy Grace likewise help me in avoiding all Kinds of Sin this Day, so as not wilfully to offend thee in Words or Actions ; not to join with any who give ill Example, who encourage or invite to what is an Offence against thy Law. In this, O God, I beseech thee give me Grace and Courage ; for what will it profit me to get a Livelihood by my Labour, if by doing what is sinful I lose my Soul ?

Grant therefore, besides all other Duties, I may be careful in keeping Peace : that, for this End, I may with Patience bear with the Ways of such are troublesome or weak ; be silent under Provocations ; forbear all quarrelsome and reproachful Language ; withdraw when I find myself disturbed ; and upon no Account be a Whisperer, in carrying Stories, or relating to others what has been said to them behind their Backs.

For observing these Particulars, I ask thy Grace, O God, because I know how strict thy Command is, of keeping Peace, and of living in Charity with all ; and that if I do it not, I cut myself off from the Hopes of seeing thy Face in Heaven.

In these and all other Duties assist me, O God, from above, and help me in overcoming all my usual Weakness. To thee I consecrate all my Labours, and beg thy Blessing to attend me this Day in all I do.

For Servants, &c. who have but little Time.

TO thee, O God, I offer myself and all the Labours of this Day, and I most humbly beg thy Blessing to accompany me in all my Undertakings.

I confess I am a Sinner, and that Punishment is due to my Sins ; and therefore I accept of all the Labour and other Troubles that shall happen to me this Day, as the Chastisement of my Sins : Grant, O Lord, I may suffer it with the Patience of an humble Penitent.

Help me likewise, that I may be faithful in every Duty ; that nothing may be lost or injured through my Neglect ; that I may not waste, or mis-spend, or take,

or give away, but with the Permission of those whom I serve: Grant I may make a Conscience of being careful in every Part of my Duty, and that I may do all, not with Eye-service, as pleasing Men, but as serving thee, my God, who art Witness of all I do, who requirest me to be just and faithful, and to whom I must give an Account.

Give me likewise the Spirit of Obedience, of Humility, and Meekness; that I may cheerfully comply with all lawful Commands; that I may not murmur at any Thing, nor give any disrespectful Answers, but take all Uneasiness with Silence, as from thy Hand, O God, who art a just Judge, and mayest afflict, exercise, and punish me, as thou pleasest.

Another Petition I make to thee, that by thy Grace I may be preserved from all Sin; that I offend not in my Words or Actions; that I join not with others in what is evil; that I give not ill Example to others, nor yield to others in whatever is injurious to those over me, or causes Disorder in the Family, or is displeasing to thee.

I ask again, O God, thy Grace, that this Day I may keep Peace with all; that I may engage in no Quarrel, give no provoking Language, make no Parties, back-bite none, that I may not be the Devil's Messenger, in whispering and carrying Stories, which is the Seed of all Division; and if any Provocations are offered me, that I may suppress all Passions, be moderate in my Answers, and follow the Gospel, in doing Good for Evil.

Thus, O God, may I be under thy Protection this Day; may I walk in the Way of thy Commandments, in avoiding Evil, and doing Good; and then, though a poor Servant, I shall be happy in being in thy Favour, who art no Respecter of Persons. Go along with me, O God, this Day, and be a Blessing to me.

LOOK upon me, O merciful Father, with the Eyes of Compassion this Day, and take me into thy Protection. Have regard to the difficult Circumstances of

of my Life, consider my great Weaknes, and give me thy Grace to help me according to my Necesitieſ.

O God, to thee I bow down and offer myself to receive whatever Difficulties or Troubles shall, by thy Appointment, be my Exercice this Day ; I confess thee to be just in all thy Judgements, and that whatever my Punishment be, it is much less than my Sins deserve.

I confess again, thou art sovereign Lord of all, and I am only a poor Creature. It is just thy Will should be done in all Things, and that every Thing should be in thy Creatures, as thou art pleased to order it. These have nothing to do but to submit, and in Silence to bow down and receive thy Commands, and not only to approve, but also to rejoice in the Accomplishment of thy Will.

Thus, O God, and in this Spirit I desire to receive whatever is to be my Portion this Day : Whatever it be, it is most certainly thy Will, and let this be enough for me. Only this Grace I beg of thee, to remember me under all my Trouble, to grant me Patience to suffer it as a Christian, and to refresh my Soul with inward Comforts.

I own, indeed, Nature is unwilling to suffer, and desirous of Relief ; this Desire I lay before thee, but still so that I resign myself wholly into thy Hands, to do in this as thou knowest best for me. Thou art my God, thy Will be done.

For though Suffering be troublesome, yet I understand it may be more for my Advantage. It is the State which Christ chose for himself and for his Apostles, and for infinite others, his best and most faithful Servants : By this Way he purified their Souls from Corruption, gave them a Dislike of this World, and prepared them for a Life of Bliss ; and I do not question but this has been the Means of Salvation to many.

Suffering having been thus dignified, and beneficial to so many Souls, it may likewise be so to me ; it may be the greatest of Mercies, even the Way by which I

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am to work out my Salvation, and much more to the Purpose than all the Peace, Plenty, and Ease which the World affords. As such, O God, I accept it; but help me then I beseech thee, with thy Grace, that I may make a good Use of it.

Deliver me from all Murmuring and Impatience, from all Fretfulness, Dejection, and desponding Amusements; let not my Thoughts be taken up with such unprofitable and even sinful Entertainments; but let my great and general Concern be, how to bear up with a Christian Spirit under my Trial, and make the best Use I can of my present Sufferings. May this, O God, be my Study; to this one Point may all my Thoughts be turned, as often as my Spirits begin to sink, or Anguish oppresses my Soul.

Thus, O merciful Father, may I go on every Day, hoping in thy Goodness, that thou wilt have Compassion on this unhappy Clay, and either relieve it, or support it under the Weight thou art pleased to lay upon it. In this Hope I rest this Day; with the same Hope I offer myself this Day into thy Hands; and, as I heartily desire thy Will may be done, so I heartily beg thy Grace, that I may with Patience, with Readiness, with Clearfulness, and Comfort, embrace the Appointments of thy holy Will, whatever they be.

For bearing the Burthen of the Day.

TO thee, O sovereign Lord, who knowest what Difficulties and Troubles are to be my Portion this Day, and how little prepared I am, through my great Weakness, to bear them, to thee I present myself, beseeching thee to have Compassion on thy poor Servant, to stretch forth thy Hand of Mercy towards me this Day, and to give me Grace and Strength according to my Necessities.

I solemnly protest to thee, my Lord and my God, that I am troubled at my usual Impatience; and it is a Grief to me to find such daily Effects of my Weakness, after so many repeated Resolutions of doing better. But behold, my God, I appeal to thee, to be more faithful to thee, and to go through all the Difficulties

Difficulties of Life with the Patience, Resignation, and Peace, as becomes a Disciple of my Lord Jesus.

Help me therefore I beseech thee, O merciful Father, and leave me not this Day to myself; but thro' thy infinite Goodnes give me Strength, that whatever my Burthen is to be I may not be surprized with Passion, I may give no Offence by my Words or Actions, nor admit of interior Disquiets, nor of immoderate Solicitude, nor of Melancholy or Dejection, nor give Disturbance to others, but receive it with a ready Submission to thy holy Will, and go under it with such a composed and truly humble Patience as my Redeemer has taught me, both by Word and Example: Hear this my Petition, O God, and let me have the Comfort this Day of having carried my Burthen, my Cros, with Patience, and without offending thee, my Lord and my God.

O GOD, who hast manifested thy Power in strengthening thy Servants under so many severe Trials, and giving them Courage not to shrink at the greatest Terrors; shew this Mercy to me also, tho', through my Sins, unworthy of what I ask, that I may not sink, nor be dejected, or discouraged at whatever Trials I shall meet this Day; but grant I may receive and suffer them all with that true Submission and Constancy of Spirit, as to shew whose Disciple I am.

Wherefore I beseech thee by thy Grace to prevent in me all immoderate Fear, Passion, Solicitude, or Distrust; for if I admit of these Weaknesses I shall make no Advantage, but be a Loser by the Cros which thou shalt lay upon me. And tho' I am very weak, and upon this Consideration have great Reason to fear, yet still, O God, raise up my Soul with a Confidence in thee; and with this Hope may I banish all Fears from my Breast, and stand like a true Disciple unmoved in the Sight of all that is terrible. In this Manner carry me on, O God, this Day; and whatever my Trials are let me never be tired, but keep up a good Spirit under all the Troubles which shall be my Exercise.

For Discretion.

I CONFESS before thee, O God, my manifold Weakness, and therefore most humbly beseech thee, by thy Grace, to secure me against the usual Effects of it. Grant that this Day I may neither speak nor do any thing rashly or unadvisedly, so as to offend thee or my Neighbour, or that can be made an ill Use of by any Observers, to the Prejudice of myself or others, or of any Cause that is good. But so direct me that I may be considerate in my Words, Behaviour, and Actions, that I may not run into Mischief, but do all to Edification. *Amen.*

For Persons under all Necessities.

IT being thy Command, O God, that we shoud pray for one another, and thus practise some Part of that Charity which our blessed Redeemer has shewed to us: Hear now my Petition, I beseech thee, in Behalf of all those for whom I at present come to ask thy Help.

Have Mercy, O God, on all those who are educated, or otherwise engaged in Errors, and lead them to thy Truths: Open their Eyes, I beseech thee, and be thou a Light to them, to conduct their Feet into the Ways of Peace.

Let those have a particular Share in this Mercy who sincerely seek thee, who serve thee with an upright Heart, and being disengaged from all worldly Motives, not only desire to find thee, but are in full Liberty of Spirit to follow thee wherever thy Light shall appear to them.

Relieve those who are perplexed with Doubts of Conscience, and discover thyself to them. Let them not consume their Thoughts in vain, but mercifully direct them to the Choice of such Means, by which they may find a solid Peace.

Be thou a Comforter, O God, to all those who are now labouring under the Agonies of Death; stand thou by them, and mercifully deliver them from all the Snares of the Enemy. Draw their Hearts powerfully to thee; give them a true Repentance, and let the infinite Merits of thy Son's bitter Passion keep them above Despair. Help them, O God, according to their

their severall Necessities, and shew thyself an indulgent Father to them.

Have Compassion on all Christians who are Slaves to Infidels ; give them Patience under all their Trials ; confirm their Hearts against all Temptations, that they may never think of purchasing their Liberty by renouncing thee. Shew thyself a God to them ; as thou knowest their Necessities, so I beseech thee to help them ; and teach them to engage thy Goodness in their Relief, by being faithful to thee.

Look upon all those who are in Prison : Support them, O God, under all their Difficulties ; preserve them from the Contagion of ill Company ; raise up their Hearts to thee ; suffer them not to seek Comfort in Sin, nor to make Extravagance and Vice the Relief of their Unhappiness ; but teach them, I beseech thee, to sweeten their Troubles by Patience and Humility, and by a true Submission to thy holy Will, and be thou, O Lord, their Comforter.

Have Pity on all that are oppressed, persecuted, or suffer any Injustice : Confirm these, O God, with Patience ; help them to make a good Use of their Sufferings ; appear in their Relief, and let them not want thy Comforts.

Regard all those with Compassion, O God, whose Circumstances are so hard in this World that they see nothing before them but Poverty, Misery, or Distress. Visit these, I beseech thee, with thy heavenly Grace, and shew thyself a Father to them. Teach them to hope in thy Goodness, and give them Courage according to the Difficulties of their State. Open the Hearts of some of thy faithful Servants for their Relief, and strengthen them against all Temptations, which put them upon seeking Help out of thee, renouncing Heaven for Bread.

Have Mercy on all those Heads of Families who by Intemperance, Gaming, Prodigality, Neglect, or any other Way, are unnaturally bringing Ruin on themselves, and on those whom they are bound to support. Give them, O God, Understanding to see their Wickedness ; give them Courage and Strength to forsake their evil Ways ; and make them zealous in thy

thy Law, that by a new Life they may atone for their past Follies, for all the ill Examples and Scandals they have given, and now become the Comforts of their Families.

Let thy Mercy likewise reach, O God, to all yet in their youthful Years : Preserve them from all Rashness and Indiscretion ; keep them from ill Company and other Dangers ; give them a Sense of their own Weakness, and of the many Snares that are before them ; convince them of the Vanity of all worldly Charms ; and by a Life of Piety may they engage thee to be their perpetual Guide and Protector. As for such who are now in Danger of being made a Prey, have Compassion on them ; pardon their Follies, and be thou, O God, their Deliverer. And for those who have taken evil Ways, break all their Bonds, I beseech thee ; open all their Eyes to see their Unhappiness, and give them Grace to amend.

Again, O God, I implore thy Goodness in Behalf of all sinful Christians, such as have unhappily prostituted themselves to Vice : Touch their Hearts, and give them a true Sense of their Misery ; powerfully call them from their Wickedness ; give them a wholesome Fear of thy Judgements, and may the Knowledge of thy Mercies to returning Sinners encourage them to a speedy Repentance.

Have Mercy on all Sinners in whatever Way they have departed from thee, their Creator. Awaken these from all their Blindness, and soften their hardened Hearts. For the Glory of thy Name have Compassion on them, that thy holy Faith may be no more blasphemed for the Scandals of such Professors ; and that Innocence may not have so many ill Examples, to lead it out of the Way of Salvation. O God, look down and see how great is the Deformity of the Christian World, through the general Corruption of all Kinds of Wickedness with which it is over-run ; send Help I beseech thee, and through thy infinite Goodness reclaim all Sinners from their vicious Ways. O God of Mercy, let not so many perish who have been redeemed by the Blood of thy only Son ; but by the Ways of a sincere Conversion bring them back to their

their Duty, that they may for ever bless thy Goodness which has snatched them out of the Jaws of Death.

I recommend likewise to thy Goodness, O God, all such Christians as lie on the Bed of Sickness, or are visited with Pain. Remember their Weakness, I beseech thee, and give them Strength according to the Difficulty of their Trials. Forsake them not, O God, in their Distress, but turn their Hearts to thee, and hear them calling upon thee in the Day of their Tribulation. Grant, O Father of Mercy, they may not offend thee by Impatience, nor fall under any Dejection of Mind, but give them Grace to improve under their Sufferings.

Have regard to such Christians as are subject to Melancholy, to Dejection of Spirit, or to any Sort of Oppression. These, O God, are weak, and, being exposed to many Mischiefs both of Body and Mind, stand in great Need of thy Help. Let their Necessities, O God, move thee to Compassion; and give them all that Help which they want; give them Courage under their Evil; give Discretion to manage it, and Patience to bear whatever Part of it they are not able to overcome. O God, behold their unhappy Circumstances, and let thy Grace direct them into such a Method as may be most effectual for their temporal and eternal Good.

Let those too, O merciful Father, partake of thy speedy Help, who, through the Weight either of their Misfortunes or Sins, begin to lose their Hope, and are inclining to Despair. Raise up those sinking Souls, I beseech thee, and let the conforming Light of thy Goodness and Mercy shine upon them. Revive their Spirits with thy Promises, and let them have such Supports of thy Grace, that they may at present confess that thou art their God. Hear my Prayer, O blessed Lord, in Behalf of these unhappy Souls; defend them from the Assaults of the Enemy, and suffer them not to perish thro' his Snares, but with a firm Hope teach them to rest in thee.

Have Mercy, O God, on all States and Conditions of Christians, and according to their several Necessities, so I beseech thee let them find thy Help. Help
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all Virgins, all those who live a single Life, establish their Hearts against all Snares, and teach them to make a good Use of the Advantage they have in being disengaged from the World. Help all that are in a married State ; give them Discretion and Patience for the good Management of their present Circumstances. Assist such as are Parents with a particular Grace, for duly satisfying their difficult Charge in the Education of their Children, and for the good Government of their Families. Help all in the State of Widowhood. Give those Wisdom who design to alter their Condition, and be thou, O God, the Comfort and Counsel of such as consecrate the Remainder of their Days to thee.

And in whatever Families, or between whatever Persons, there are at present any Contentions, Quarrels, or uncharitable Animosities, heal them, I beseech thee, and mercifully restore that Spirit of the primitive Christians, whereby all may study to put on the Bowels of Charity, and embrace every Neighbour in the Bonds of Peace.

Give Grace, O God, to the Rich, and teach them to make such Use of their Plenty that they may be able to give an Account of their Talents, and not be confounded. Comfort the Poor in all their Wants, and so strengthen them in Submission and Patience, that what they suffer here may be the Increase of their eternal Crown. Give a Sense of Justice to all who take Pains for a Livelihood, and grant they may be honest in all their Dealings, and be afraid of doing Wrong. Direct Servants in all their Ways ; make them faithful and diligent in what belongs to their Charge, and teach them to take Pains for Heaven as well as for Bread. Let thy Law dwell in the Hearts of all Officers of Justice, in Magistrates, and in all Rulers, whom thou hast put over us, that they may do in all Things what is right and just, as to the Encouragement of the Good, and Punishment of the Evil-doer. Be a Guide to all the Pastors of thy Church ; give them the Spirit of the Apostles, that with Zeal and Piety they may labour in their great Charge, and by good Example shine as so many Lights to the Flock. Encourage the Diligent, spur on those that are slothful, and reform

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all those, I beseech thee, who live not to Edification.

In thy Mercy likewise remember, O God, all the barbarous Nations of the World, all Turks and Jews, and bring them to the Knowledge of thy Truth. Thy infinite Power can never want Means for effecting this great Work, whenever thou art pleased. Vouchsafe therefore, I beseech thee, to have Compassion on those numerous People, and let thy Goodness command them to enter into thy Fold. Have Mercy, O God, on all, who art the Creator and Redeemer of all.

At Night.

HAVING experienced the Effects of thy infinite Goodness, O God, towards me this Day, I here now acknowledge them before thee, and give thee Thanks, for that thou hast been so merciful to me, who through my Sins, am unworthy, of the least of thy Favours.

Thanks be to thee, O Father of Mercy, for that I have been provided this Day with all Necessaries for a comfortable Subsistence, which so many Thousands have wanted, more deserving than I. For this, O God, I bow down and acknowledge it thy Mercy.

Thanks be to thee, O God, for my Preservation this Day, amidst so many Dangers of this World. Infinite are the Misfortunes of every Day; and that I have had no Part in them is the Effect of thy Goodness. For this, O God, I bow down and acknowledge it thy Mercy.

Thanks be to thee, O God, for whatever Share of Health I have had this Day, and for whatever Success I have had in my Business. For this, O God, I bow down and acknowledge it thy Mercy.

Thanks be to thee, O God, for thy Goodness, in having strengthened me against Temptations, preserved me from many Indiscretions, and exempted me from many Sins. There has been no Sin committed against thee this Day but might have been my Unhappiness, and it is thy Mercy that I have been preserved. For this, O God, I bow down and acknowledge it thy Mercy.

Thanks

Thanks be to thee, O God, for whatever Good I have done this Day, or the Duties I have performed, and whatever Care I have used in resisting Evil, in overcoming myself or the World. For this, O God, I bow down and acknowledge it thy Mercy.

I thank thee likewise, O God, for all other Blessings which I have received from thy Hand, however unknown to me ; for all the Effects of thy Protection and Providence ; and in particular that thou hast spared my Life, and not cut me off in the midst of my Sins.

It is a great Mercy, O God, that thou givest me Time to repent ; and I most humbly beg thy Grace, that I may make a good Use of the Addition of Days which thou grantest me. And that I may no more put that to the Hazard, which if once lost can never more be recovered, let it be thy Mercy to me to give me this Night a sincere and hearty Repentance of all the Sins of my whole Life, and so to dispose my Soul that I may close my Eyes this Night with such a solid Peace of Conscience, as if this Day were to be my last, and I were to see no more.

In order to this, behold, O God, I here prostrate myself before thee, in the humble Acknowledgement of all my Sins. I confess to thee my Iniquities, my Ingratitude, my general Abuse of thy Blessings, and my daily Neglect of whatever has belonged to thy Service. And I own my Unworthiness to be such, that I can see nothing in myself but Motives of Despair. But knowing thee to be a God infinite in Compassion, Goodness, and Mercy, and that thou hast promised Pardon to such as with a true Repentance are converted to thee ; in Confidence of this Promise I turn to thee, and protest, that my Sins are a Trouble to me ; it is an Affliction to me to see how careless I have been in serving thee, how unworthily I have neglected thy Commandments, and how rebelliously I have lifted up my Head against thee. I am confounded to think how such a poor Worm as I, who am nothing but Dust and Misery, and have nothing to trust to but thy pure Mercy, should so long live forgetful of thee, so loving a Father, and even so far despise

despise thy Will, as seek to please myself in such Ways as I knew were displeasing to thee.

Ah, my God, this my Iniquity is now a Trouble to me, and I thank thee, O God, that it is so. Perfect this Trouble, I beseech thee, and grant it may be the Trouble of an humble and contrite Heart ; such a Trouble, as may be accompanied with a real Abhorrence of all wilful Sin, a Fear of all Relapse, and a sincere Resolution of doing whatever may be necessary for overcoming my own Corruption, and avoiding all the Occasions of Sin : Grant this, O God, and then I doubt not but thy Promises will be fulfilled in me, and I shall find Mercy in thy Sight.

Thus I hope it is at present, and with this Hope I commit myself to thy fatherly Protection this Night. Defend me, I beseech thee, from all Evil, and suffer not the Enemy to have any Power over me ; deliver me from all Illusions, and give me Grace to resist whatever is sinful. Grant me a happy Rest, such Rest as may be necessary for Refreshment, but not an Indulgence of Sloth. Lord, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit.



EXERCISES



EXERCISES ON VIRTUES, VICES, AND OTHER SUBJECTS.

FAITH.

CONFESS thee, O my God, to be the eternal Truth, and that I am bound to believe whatever thou teachest, because thou canst teach nothing but what is true. This is my Duty, but to do it must be thy Gift, O God: Grant therefore, I beseech thee, that with an humble Faith I may receive, and with a firm Faith hold fast all those Truths which thou hast revealed, and commanded all thy Faithful to believe.

I must acknowledgē that many of thy sacred Mysterie appear strange and surprising to my weak Capacity, and that when I endeavour to comprehend them, I lose both myself and them in the Enquiry: Hence, how often is it that a heavy Oppression damps my Spirits, and I quite sink down, distracted between the Fears of a sinful Presumption, and of Infidelity.

Vain Imaginations likewise trouble me, when led by a boundless Curiosity I endeavour to take off the Vail from those Things which thou art pleased should be yet mysterious to us, in this imperfect State; and a wonderful Confusion is the Effect of these Attempts, when

when committing thy divine Truths to the Examination of my working Fancy, I always find Darkness to be the Punishment of my undue Search for Light.

In these Particulars I own my Weakness, my Rashness, Folly, and Sin. For since all the Faculties of my Soul are so wounded, weakened, and almost disabled by Sin, that I cannot truly comprehend the least of thy Works; that the most inconsiderable of thy Creatures are a Mystery to me; that in all my Enquiries I find little of Certainty, besides the reproachful Conviction of my own scanty and short-fighted Understanding; how can I be excused from sinful Rashness, who, amidst this daily Evidence of my Weakness, yet presume to reason, judge, and pronounce of thee, and of those greater Mysteries which are infinitely superior to all that is created?

Did I not every Moment meet with Proofs of my own Blindness; did I not believe thy Judgements to be unsearchable, and thy Ways past finding out, I might have some Plea to offer in my Excuse; but as it is, I must acknowledge it to be the Folly and Pride of a blind, sinful Worm, which knowing nothing, yet still boldly go on, as if I were capable, under this Blindness, of discerning and knowing all.

O God, pardon, I beseech thee, all this my past Presumption; and let not this Rashness of a poor, blind Creature, exclude me from thy Mercy. For though I have often fallen into this Guilt, yet I here, with a profound Humility, own the Folly of it: I confess to thee all my Pride and Weakness in this Point; I accuse and condemn myself for it, and I appeal to thy infinite Goodness to shew Mercy to a repenting Sinner.

And that I may give Proof of my Sincerity, behold, fearful of myself, I earnestly beg thy Protection of this unhappy Clay, that I may never be left to the undue Liberty of my own Thoughts, in which I can have no Confidence; but that, by thy Grace, they may receive an effectual Check, as often as they are transgressing the Bounds which thou hast prefixed to them. Be thou a Guard to them, and let my Thoughts be confined to that Discipline which is thy Appointment.

ment. Be thou a Watch over me, and as often as I forget myself, powerfully awaken my Soul, and make me sensible of my Presumption.

Defend me from all the Temptations of a vain Curiosity, that I may never pretend to unveil what thou art pleased should be yet a Mystery to me. Moderate all my restless Imaginations and working Fancies, that they never presume to look into thy Councils and disclose thy Secrets ; and whenever Grief or Melancholy oppresses my Soul, convince me then of my more than ordinary Weakness ; and let not my clouded Faculties undertake to judge of such Matters, which, in their clearest Light, they are not capable of discerning.

Let an humble Modesty keep my Reason within its due Bounds, that I may not be too wise in my own Conceit ; that while I make Use of this Light, according to thy Appointment in the common Conduct of my Life, I may not presume it to be the true Measure of thy Being, of thy Power, and of thy Truths, and boldly throw all that by as fabulous which my Reason cannot comprehend.

I own it an Act of the soundest Reason, that thy Creatures submit to thee, their God ; and that, as for whatever Mysteries are delivered to them by thy Authority, it is as much against Reason not to receive them, as it is to reject such obvious Truths, which have Evidence and Demonstration to recommend them. I have therefore nothing to dispute, nothing to question, in whatever Points come to me with thy Authority. Though they are in themselves obscure, and without any Proportion to my Reason, yet when thy Authority appears, and thou hast said, *They are so*, there is in this one Point a *Greater Certainty* than whatever can come from the clearest of human Lights, and this is the Certainty of *Faith*.

It is true, I hear not thy Voice, as *Moses* did and the Apostles, but I hear thy Church, by which thou speakest to the whole World ; and in hearing those whom thou commandest me to hear, I hear thee. Thy Church is purchased by the Blood of my Redeemer ; Christ is the Foundation and Rock upon which it is built ; the Holy

Holy Ghost is its Light and Teac her: I have thy solemn Word engaged, that the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it; that it is the Ground and Pillar of Truth, and that it shall be led into all Truth to the End of the World: It is one Article of my Creed; I have thy exprefs Command to hear it, and thy Promise that it shall teach Truth; and is not all this enough for me to rest on, and to conclude, without leaving Place for Doubt, that in hearing thy Church I hear thee!

O God, I acknowledge this to be an Effect of thy infinite Mercy, that in Things of this high Nature, such as are the Christian Mysteries, thou hast not left me to the Uncertainty of my own Judgement, nor to the doubtful Decisions of human Reason or Learning; for what could have been the Effect of such Uncertainty, in a Case where Truth is made the Condition of Eternity, but a restless Confusion, Distraction, and Despair? I thank thee for having, in this Point, abundantly provided for my Security and Peace, in establishing such an Authority for my Instruction, which, having thy Commission to teach and thy Promise to secure it, I cannot question, but by bringing thy infinite Goodness and Truth into doubt.

I thank thee likewise for that sacred Volume of thy holy Word, in which are recorded all those Lessons which can be necessary for our Instruction and Comfort; where the Unbeliever may learn to adore thy Power; where the Sinner is invited by Mercy, and terrified by Justice; where the Slothful are spurred on, the Inconstant are confirmed, and thy faithful Servants are powerfully and sweetly carried on in all those Ways which lead to the eternal Possession of thee. May my Soul always feed on these Truths, and by them may I always live; that having overcome the World and myself, at the last Hour, not I, but Christ may be found in me.

May I always read thy Truths with Reverence, and an humble Submission to that Spirit by which they were written. Permit me not to abuse this Food of Life by my own corrupt Interpretations, nor to pervert to my own Destruction what was designed by thy Mercy

Mercy for my greatest Good. I know the Charge thou hast given, of neither *adding* to thy Word nor *diminishing* it. If this were only as to the *Words* or *Letter*, it is easily observed, and the Danger can be only to few of incurring the Guilt. But if *adding* to the *Sense* of thy *Word*, or *diminishing* it, be an equal Sacrilege, then, O God, how fearful ought I to be of giving Liberty to my own private Expositions; lest, by being bold in any Mistake, I do Violence to thy sacred Word, and by this Presumption shut myself out of the Book of Life!

Give me, O God, a docile Heart, and let that true Humility possess my Understanding, that it may, without Dispute, yield itself captive in Obedience to Christ and his Truths. If there be Darkness in what is proposed, may I ever acknowledge this more be-bombing thy infinite Majesty, to be above all that I can apprehend: And may I own the Justice of believing without seeing, who am an unhappy Heir of those Sinners who first transgressed thy Command by the unreasonable Desires of seeing what thou hast hidden from them. Upon this Motive of so just a Penance, I submit to all the Darkness of my State, and cheerfully receive all thy Truths, though I have only an imperfect Glimpse of them, and the fuller Prospect is intercepted by a cloud.

But, O God, since I must own some Seeds of Infidelity to be still left in me, and that, through my general Corruption, my Faith is not privileged against Temptations, any more than other Virtues, I most earnestly beseech thee to confirm me against all such Assaults; and that, as my Faith is thy Gift, so my Perseverance in it may be the Effect of thy Grace. Defend me against the Delusion of all Errors, and against the plausible Snares of Wit or Learning; strengthen me under all the Surprises of a roving Fancy, and may I ever start at the Rashness, as often as my Reason exceeds its Bounds, and, instead of receiving what is delivered, is casting all thy Mysteries over again in its own scanty and disproportioned Moulds. In these and all other Dangers let thy Grace, O God, secure me.

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And because there are many other Temptations, as from the Discourse and Railleries of prophane and atheistical Men ; as likewise from the Difficulties of Times in which thy Truth lies under severe Oppressions ; I beseech thee to preserve me in all these Dangers. Take from me the Love of all prophane Company, and give me a Dislike of their Conversation : May I have an Abhorrence of whatever is thus displeasing to thee, and undermines at once the whole Work of the Gospel. I most earnestly implore thy Mercy in this Point ; defend me against this detestable Crime ; rather let me now die, than live to become such a professed Rebel against thee. And as for all other Dangers, I beseech thee so to establish my Heart in Truth, that I may rather choose all Extremities in this World, than purchase a short Quiet, by denying that for which I shall be denied by Christ, before thee his Father in Heaven.

O God, who didst so strengthen *Abraham* in Faith, that he believed in Hope even against Hope ; grant that, with a like Faith, I may receive all thy Truths, and that Objections from human Reason may never weaken in me whatever is delivered by thy Authority.

O God, who didst give to *Noah* and *Lot* a firm Faith in thy Words ; grant that, with a like Faith, I may believe whatever thou hast spoken.

O God, who didst appoint *Moses* over thy People for their Conduct into *Canaan* ; who didst speak to them by him, and therefore commandedst them to hear him ; and with thy several Judgements didst punish those who questioned his Authority, and separated from him ; grant that I may ever hear those whom thou hast appointed to guide thy Flock, that in them I may hear thee ; that I may never lessen their Authority who have their Charter from thee ; and that I may equally dread all Division and Schism, as to be cut off from thee.

O God, by whose Gift the Apostles did believe in Christ, did obey his Word, and readily forsook all to follow him ; grant that, with a like Faith, I may believe whatever thou hast taught, and that, with a like

like Zeal, despising the World, I may perform whatever thou commandest.

O God, who, by an Effect of thy Justice, didst permit the Scribes and Pharisees to abide in their Blindness, so as not to be moved by the Wonders of thy Power and Goodness, but, by their malicious Misconstructions, to lay all thy Works under the worst of Infamy ; deliver me, I beseech thee, from all Degrees of this Blindness, that neither Education, Interest, Prejudice, or Passion, may corrupt my Judgement, and hinder me in the discerning of Truth ; grant, in thy Mercy, that I may never oppose thy Truths ; and that I never say or do any Thing by which thy Faith may be brought under any Reproach.

O God, who requirest of all thy Faithful to be holy in their Conversation, as their Vocation is holy ; and to avoid all that can give Offence, that so Unbelievers may not thence take Occasion of blaspheming thy Faith ; grant my Conversation may be in all Things agreeable to the Gospel I profess, that I never give Scandal to Unbelievers, and that Truth may not be brought under a Reproach by any Indiscretions, Follies, Rashness, Irregularities, or Sins of mine.

O God, who by the Strength of Faith didst carry the Apostles and infinite Numbers of the Primitive Christians through most difficult Trials, and by thy Grace didst so support them that they suffered all Extremities in Testimony of thy Truth, and rejoiced in their Sufferings ; grant that I may inherit a large Portion of their Spirit ; that I may not only be steady in the Profession of thy Faith, but likewise be ready to part with all the dearest Conveniencies of Life, rather than forsake or disown any Truth received from thee. May it be rather my Glory than my Fear, to suffer in such a Cause, in which thou art not only the Witness, but likewise the Reward and Crown.

O God, who hast commanded all Nations of the World to be united in one Faith ; and both in thy Precepts and Judgement hast declared thy Abhorrence of Divisions, Schisms, and Heresy, mercifully send forth thy Light upon all that are in Error, that being sensible of their Mistake, they may be all united in

in the Truth. Heal, we beseech thee, all Schisms ; take away all Heresies, whatever and wherever they be. Open the Hearts of the blind Jews, that they may believe ; and have Compassion on all poor Infidels throughout the World, that being brought to the Knowledge of thee and of thy Son Christ, they may become a Part of thy Fold.

O God, I beseech thee, by those Bowels of Mercy which moved thee to the Redemption of lost Man, and by that Blood which my Redeemer shed upon the Cross, in Obedience to thy holy Will, that thou wouldest have Regard to divided *Christendom*, and mercifully heal its Wounds. The Deformity of it is very great, occasioned by its Schisms ; and such are the dismal Effects, that Religion and Truth are in Danger of being lost, amidst the uncharitable Contentions for them. There is nothing can prevent a general Deluge of Libertinism, Prophaneness, and Atheism, in these Disorders, but thy Hand, O God. Have Pity therefore, on thy People, and for the Glory of thy Name, and of the Gospel planted by the Blood of thy only Son, send Remedy for this spreading Evil. Inspire all Prelates and Pastors with the Thoughts of Peace ; move all temporal Magistrates to be instrumental in it ; give to all, who undertake the Ministry, a Zeal for this general Good, and prepare the People with a sincere Desire of becoming thus truly happy.

For this End, O blessed God, weaken in as many as profess thy Name, all Impressions which are not of Truth ; and may it be their Confusion of Conscience, who suffer the Arguments of Interest or Party to prevail with them, to the Prejudice of that common Union both in Faith and Charity, which thou requirest from all that believe the Gospel. O blessed Jesus, plead this Cause with thy eternal Father, and let not the Work of thy Redemption lie any longer under this Reproach. Obtain for all a zealous Desire for Truth ; open the Eyes of all that are in Error ; communicate to them a new Light, give them upright and sincere Hearts, and let no Obstinacy or Passion stand in the Way of this so much desired Good. Inspire all thy

Members to unite in this Petition, and their Prayers, their Sighs and Tears, never cease to importune Heaven in this Cause : May all join in it, till all come into one Body, of which thou art the Head, in which all with one Voice may glorify thee, who with the Father and the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest one God, World without End. *Amen.*

H O P E.

I CONFESS, O God, that thy Mercy is infinite, thy Goodness incomprehensible, and that thy Compassion for all, that call upon thee in Distress, is above Measure.

I know, likewise, that thy Promises are many and solemn, which thou hast made to all such as place their Confidence in thee, that they shall not be confounded; that such as seek thee, shall find thee; and that thou wilt be a Helper to all those who fly to thee in their Necessities.

I know again, thou art both faithful to thy Promises, and hast all Power to perform them; so that there is nothing in thee from whence the poorest Petitioner can take any Occasion of Distrust.

It is true, however, that through Sin I am become not only unworthy of thy Mercies, but likewise incapable of doing any Thing that can possibly move thee to have Compassion on me; so that tho' thou, O God, art infinite in Mercy, yet thro' Sin, I see myself excluded from it.

But here again, under these unhappy Circumstances, I have the greatest Proof of thy Mercy, in the Reconciliation made by the Death of thy only Son on the Cross. For by his Blood the Price of Sin being paid, our Peace is made with thee; and I can now boldly come, as thy Apostle encourages me, *to the Throne of Grace, to obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in Time of Need.* So That altho' in myself I see nothing but Grounds of Despair; yet now, in this Ransom, having so plentiful a Redemption, such a Victim, and such a High-Priest, to plead and make Intercession for me,

me, I have all the Motives of Hope that I can desire ; and, having all thy Promises open before me, I have Hopes as large as thy Promises.

This Hope, thus grounded on thy Mercy, O God, on thy Power, on thy Promises, on thy Fidelity and Truth, thro' the Merits and Passion of thy only Son, I beseech thee to confirm and strengthen in me, that it may be the Comfort of my Soul under all the Difficulties of this Life ; that it may support me in Dangers ; that it may give Life to my Prayer, and, carrying me thro' all the Changes of my mortal Course, may accompany me even in the Horror of Death, and never fail, but in the Possession of thee, my God.

This I have Reason to ask, because of the great Weakness to which I am subject ; and which, with all Humility, I here confess to thee, O God. For altho' I believe in thee all that possibly can oblige me to persevere in a strong and uninterrupted Hope ; yet how often and how easily do I lose the Sense of these Motives, as if (I am ashamed to say it) as if thou, my God, either hadst no Knowledge of what afflicts me, or no Concern to help me ?

It is but too true (for why should I conceal my Miserie ?) that in ordinary Accidents, such as are inseparable from human Life, I presently lose all Patience, and am often left without Comfort : When sudden Darknes oppresses my Mind, I seem like a Person quite out of the Care of Heaven : When any Misfortune interrupts my Peace, I sink down, as if never more to have a Return of Comfort : When thy Scourge touches me, tho' never so just, I am inclined to murmur, and think nobody so unhappy as myself ; I sigh for Death, for my Deliverance, without considering how unprepared I am for dying, who am so impatient in the common Difficulties of Life.

These are some of my many InfirmitieS, O Lord, wherein my Soul, as it were ignorant of thy Power and Goodness, sinks so low, that she seems to be without all the Comfort of Hope. And this is a Trouble to me, to see how very weak I am ; that, when I think myself prepared for the greatest Trials, a little Accident

dent casts me so much down, that I seem to have no Knowledge of God, who can either hear or help me. Wherefore, O merciful Lord, who knowest all my Weakness, give me Leave, under this Sense which I at present have of it, to call upon thee for Help; that by thee I may be strengthened, who, without thee, am nothing.

O God, who seest my great Poverty and Weakness, stand by me, I beseech thee, under all the Contradictions, Difficulties, Losses, and Afflictions of human Life: Permit me not then to be overwhelmed with Trouble; nor let the Thoughts of Misfortunes, which cannot last long, banish from any Mind the Sense of all that is eternal. Send forth thy Light then upon me, and bring to my Mind a lively Remembrance of thy Goodness, thy Mercy, and thy Power. Let the Sight of these remove from my Heart all Oppression; let a peaceable Submission succeed; and let such a strong Hope raise up my Soul, that it may stand upright under the greatest Weight, and there go on with Comfort, where there is nothing of human Comfort, in Sight.

O God, remember me, I beseech thee, in the Day of Trouble, and when Affliction preffes hard upon me, let me then be sensible that thou art my God. May I, in that Hour, confess, that nothing happens but by thy Appointment or Permission, and with this Conviction rest satisfied under the Dispensations of thy Hand.

May I then remember that what thou ordainest is best for me; that thou knowest when to afflict, and when to give Relief; and hence, with Patience and Hope in all Trouble, may I wait for thy Comforts.

Preserve this Hope in me, as often as Heaviness or Darkness lays a Weight upon my Spirits, and almost deprives me of the Sight of Heaven. That is the Hour in which I am most in Danger, both from my own sinking Thoughts, and from the malicious Designs of the Enemy. Help me, I beseech thee, in that Hour, and defend me from all the Dangers of it; let thy heavenly Light dart forth upon my Soul, amidst

all its Darkness, let Faith be its Guide, and support it with Hope. Behold, I protest now for then, that I renounce all Kinds of Suggestions that are injurious to that Faith and Hope which I am bound to have in thee. Have regard to this as my voluntary Act ; and as to whatever other Thoughts shall occur in Time of Confusion, pass them by, I beseech thee, and with Compassion forgive them, as the Effect of a Weakness, which I lament in myself, but know not how to overcome.

Have Pity on me, O God, under all Kinds of Desjection, and teach me this one Lesson of seeking Comfort in thee, when all Things else appear bitter to me. Teach me to rejoice in God my Saviour, and to rest with Peace in him, when I seem quite forsaken, and have no Peace in any thing else. It is hard to infirm Nature to sink so low as to become stupid, and to be left without either Light or Life : This deserves Compassion ; but does it not deserve Reproach too, for a Christian to be thus cast down, when he has a God to encourage him, and infinite Power and Goodness standing ready for his Reproach ; but, under all Oppressions, may I still retain a Hope in thee ; that even then I may be filled with Courage and Comfort, when the whole World seems armed against me.

In particular, O God, have Compassion when the Number of my Sins rises up against me ; and when my repeated Endeavours for Amendment, proving fruitless, tempt me with Despair. These Thoughts sometimes weigh very heavy upon my Soul, and I seem like one lost, when I see nothing good in myself. But, O God, let thy Mercy be extended to me, even under these Circumstances, and let a lively Hope give Life to my Soul. Raise up my Spirit then with a clear Prospect of thy infinite Goodness, which is ever ready to receive the Sighs of repenting Sinners ; and let the Blood of my Redeemer be my Assurance that there is no Wickedness so great which may not be purified in these Streams. Upon this Foundation let my Hope stand firm, and defeat all the Attempts of Despair.

And when I see no Reason to trust in myself, let not then unreasonable Fears, but Joy succeed; for that, seeing no Motive to trust in myself, I am then better prepared to put my whole Trust in thee.

It is a dejecting Prospect, when a poor Creature, seeing himself upon the Entrance of Eternity, can find nothing in himself capable of affording any Comfort; nothing but repeated Failings; Purposes without Amendment; the Form of a Christian Life, without the Substance; many Things undertaken, but nothing done well; Pride, Self-love, or a worldly Spirit mixed with all he does; infinite Weakness; great Poverty; scarce any Signs of true Love of God; many known Sins continually reproaching him, besides the Apprehension of all his hidden Sins, which very much encrease his Fears. This I confess to be my Case; I wish it be not still much worse; and what can be the Effect upon my Soul, but Confusion and Despair, if thou, O God, dost not mercifully stand by me, and, by the Comforts of thy infinite Goodness, support my sinking Spirits?

Therefore I most earnestly beseech thee, most loving Father, as often as these Thoughts press immoderately upon me, that thou wouldest please to revive my Soul with the comfortable Prospect of all thy Mercies; then manifest to me thy infinite Goodness; let the Sacrifice, which Christ offered for Sinners, be present before my Eyes, and may his Voice sound in my Ears, *Come to me, all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.* With these Comforts of thy Goodness towards Sinners, may all Darkness, Desjection, and Despair, be banished from my Soul; and while I see too many Reasons to fear, because of my own Unworthiness, let this Fear be always ballanced by the Sight of thy Mercy, which commands me, amidst all Fears, to put my Trust in thee.

This Grace I ask of thee, O God, with all the Earnestness of my Soul, for that last Hour when the Anguish of Death shall come upon me. In that Hour, I beseech thee, by all thy Bowels of Compassion, to be a Comforter, a Father, and a God to me. Defend me

me then from all the Assaults of the Enemy ; and if immoderate Fears shall arise from the Apprehension of my past Sins, so as to lessen the Hope I ought to have in thee, then let the Sight of thy infinite Mercies bring new Light and Comfort to my Soul ; then command me to rest in thy Goodness, and to take Shelter in the sacred Wounds of my Redeemer ; and there, O blessed Jesus, do thou speak to my Soul ; undertake her Cause, and be thou her Advocate to the Eternal Father : Protect her against all the Designs of the Devil ; and, moderating all Terrors, raise up my Soul in Hope. Forsake me not, I beseech thee, in that last Conflict ; and having so often found the wonderful Effects of thy Goodness, throughout the whole Course of my Life, permit me not then to sink down with Fear, as if I had no God to help me ; but mercifully grant, that, with a lively Faith, and a firm Hope, I may peaceably give up my Soul into thy Hands, and rejoice in thee, my God.

O God, by whose Grace *Noab* stood constant with an entire Confidence in thee, amidst the Ruins of a perishing World, grant, that in all Troubles I may rest with a like Hope in thee.

O God, by whose Grace *Abraham* retained a firm Hope in thy Promises, amidst all the Impossibilities of Nature and common Reason ; grant that, amidst all Discouragements, I may rest with a like Confidence in thy Promises, and with a like Hope in thee.

O God, who didst support *Moses* by Hope amidst so many Difficulties and Dangers, both from *Pbarraob*, from his own People, and the Desart ; grant, that in all Difficulties and Dangers, both of Life and Death, my Soul may rest with a like Hope in thee.

O God, who, by a Hope in thy Power and Goodness, didst prepare *Joshua* for that great Work of carrying the Children of *Israël* into the Land of Promise, and subduing many strong Nations before their Face, grant that, in whatever I undertake, my Confidence may not be in human Means, but in thy Blessing and Power ; and that, by an entire Hope in these, I may

undertake and perform whatever I am to do throughout the whole Course of my Life.

O God, who, by a Hope in thy Power, didst carry on *David* fearless against the *Philistin Goliab*; grant, that a like Hope may remove from me all undue Fears, and that, confirmed by the same, I may walk on securely, wherever my Duty leads me.

O God, who, amidst so many Persecutions from *Saul*, didst still preserve *David*, and support him by Hope; mercifully assist me in all the Difficulties of this Life; and let nothing of Despair enter into my Heart, as long as I know I have a God to help me.

O God, who didst wonderfully protect *Daniel* and the three Children; so that neither the Den of Lions nor the fiery Furnace were able to overthrow their Hope in thee; grant, that a like Hope in thy Name may accompany me in all Dangers, and that no Terrors of this Life may destroy or even lessen that Trust which I ought to have in thy holy Name.

O Jesus, who, by receiving into thy Favour the greatest Sinners upon their Conversion, hast given Proof of the Greatness of thy Mercy; grant, that the Horror of my Sins may never tempt me to distrust in thee; but that, in Proportion to thy tender Mercies, a lively Hope may at all Times give Life to my Soul.

O Jesus, who hast manifested to the World, that the End of thy Coming was to seek the lost Sheep, and to call Sinners to Repentance; grant that the Remembrance of this thy Goodness may remove from my Soul all Degrees of Despair; and that no Doubts of thy Mercy may ever discourage my Repentance, as often as I sincerely desire to return to thee.

O Jesus, who, for reconciling Sinners to God, didst offer thyself upon the Cross a Sacrifice for Sin; grant, that the Faith of this Mercy may be, both living and dying, the Ground of my Hope; and that I may ever come before the Throne of God with Confidence of Favour, who have the Blood of my Redeemer, true God and Man, to plead for me.

O Jesus,

O Jesus, who didst stretch forth thy Hand to Peter, sinking under the Waves ; grant, that by the same Power I may be supported ; and that, as often as my Soul is ready to sink, it may be still raised up by thee. O Jesus, as often as I fail in Faith or Hope, stretch forth thy Hand and help me.

O Jesus, who, in pardoning Sinners, and freeing the Miserable from their Infirmities, didst command them to have Faith and Confidence in thee, as one necessary Condition for receiving the Helps they desired ; grant, that by a firm Faith, and Hope in thy Goodness, I may be ever prepared for partaking the Effects of thy Mercy, and obtaining Relief in all my Necessities.

O Jesus, who hadst Compassion on the Multitude in the Desart, and by thy miraculous Power, didst plentifully feed them when they were destitute of all human Means ; grant, that, in all my Necessities, my Eyes and Expectation may be always upon thee ; and that, in the greatest Extremities, I may never lose my Hope, which has such infinite Power and Goodness to support it.

Thus, O blessed Jesus, let a firm and lively Hope in thee carry me through all the Difficulties and Discouragements of this miserable Life : And though I may have often Reason to fear, because of my great Unworthiness, yet, O God, I beseech thee, never permit these Apprehensions to be followed with a Distrust of thee. Let me always remember, that my Misery does not destroy thy Goodness, and that though I am never so unworthy, because of my manifold Sins, yet thou art still infinite in Mercy, which being always inclined, and even desirous to do Good, is always ready to have Compassion on those who are sincere in seeking it. On this Mercy I depend, on this I build all my Hope. Preserve this Hope in me, O God, in all Dangers and Distress, in all Dejections and Darkness, in all Disquiets and Trouble ; and let it not be diminished either by the Horror of my Sins, or by the Suggestions of the Devil, or by the Terror of Death : But in all Circumstances let it bear up my Soul, till it

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be past all Danger, and be secured in the happy Possession of thee, my God.

Remember likewise, O God, I beseech thee, all thy Faithful; let thy Grace and Mercy be their Comfort, in whatever Difficulties and Dangers they may be. Grant, that in all Troubles, they may have Confidence in thy holy Name, and, full of Hope, seek Help from thee. Comfort such as are afflicted, help the Oppressed, visit the Prisoners and Captive, succour the Fatherless and Widow, and mercifully assist all those who are now in their Agony: Let the Multitude of thy tender Mercies preserve all from Despair. And as for me, being poor, miserable, and a helpless Sinner, unable to do any Thing of myself, let me never trust in any such Weakness; but let my Confidence be entirely on thee. When I consider all thy Mercies, and the great Wonders of thy Goodness to poor, sinful Man, I have enough to confirm me in a settled Hope, and I beg that this Hope may never fail me.

CHARITY, or the Love of GOD.

LORD, I confess it my Duty, what thou hast commanded, that is, to love thee, my Lord God, with all my Heart, with all my Soul, with all my Strength, and with all my Mind. I know, my God, that thou art infinitely good, infinitely holy, infinitely merciful, and overflowing in all Perfection, and therefore, that it is my Duty to love thee.

I know thou hast created me, and that I have neither Being nor Blessing but what is the Effect of thy Power and Goodness; and therefore, that it is my Duty to love thee.

I know thou art the End for which I was created, and that I can expect no Happiness but in thee; and therefore, that it is my Duty to seek thee and love thee.

I know that in Compassion and Love to me, being lost through Sin, thou didst send thy only Son; and that He, being Lord of Glory, was humbled to the Death of

of the Cross, that I, a poor Captive, might be raised to Glory ; and therefore, that it is my Duty to love thee.

I know thou hast provided me with all Helps that can be necessary for carrying me through this miserable Life, to the Possession of Glory (to which, of myself, I am unable to take one Step) and this out of the Excess of thy pure Mercy to me, unworthy of all Mercies ; and therefore, that it is my Duty to love thee.

I know thou hast promised thyself to be the Recompence of whatever Good I do ; though there is not any Good I can do, but what must be the Effect of thy free Gift or Grace ; and therefore, that for thy unspeakable Goodness to me, it is my Duty to love thee.

I know that every Day of my Life I receive many Blessings from thee, though I every Day offend thee, and am unworthy of the least of them ; and therefore that it is my Duty to love thee.

I know thou hast subjected all Creatures to the Use of Man, and that the whole Creation is designed by thee for his Service : Hence I know, it is the Obligation of Man to offer himself a daily Sacrifice to thee, his Benefactor, and that it is my Duty to love thee.

Upon these, and many other Titles, I confess it my Duty to love thee, my God and Redeemer, with all my Heart, with all my Soul, with all my Strength, and with all my Mind. I confess, this Love ought to have the Command of my Heart, to rule and govern it. By this Love I ought to be directed what to seek, what to fear, what to desire, what to fly, what to do, what to avoid, what to esteem, what to despise, what to judge my Happiness, and what my Misery. This Love ought to be the Principle or Motive of all the Use I make of my Understanding, of my Will, of my Affections, of my Senses, of my Health, Strength, Time, and whatever other Talents or Blessings I have received from thee. All these ought to be ordered, applied, disposed, and regulated by the Love of thee,

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my God; for while this is to command my whole Heart, I ought to do nothing but by its Commission? This ought to order and appoint all; and thus only can I satisfy my Duty, and thy first Command, of loving thee with all my Heart, with all my Soul, with all my Strength, and with all my Mind.

I confess again, my Lord, that if I love thee with all my Heart, this Love will not be barren, but will bring forth Variety of good Fruit, and abound in good Works. It will make me refer all to thee, and desire that thou be glorified in all Things: It will incline and draw my Heart towards thee, so as to value thee above all Things; to lament its Absence from thee, and earnestly desire to be united to thee. It will raise in me a Solitude of doing thy Will, and keeping all thy Commandments. It will make me rejoice in pleasing thee; and afraid of every Thing that is displeasing to thee. It will oblige me to choose all the Inconveniences of this Life, rather than do any Thing that can hazard my eternal Separation from thee; and make me think no Suffering hard, so it may but be a Means of bringing me to the Possession of thee. It will unite my Will to thine, so as to approve and love nothing but what is acceptable to thee; and to hate whatever thou hast declared hateful to thee. It will make me desirous of conversing with thee; industrious in studying thy Will, and doing whatever it has Reason to apprehend most effectual for coming to thy Presence. It will raise in me a Disesteem of myself, and of the World, and oblige me not to regard what these commend or demand, because both these are corrupt, and averse to thee. Thus will the Love of God work, if it be truly in my Heart, and these will be some of the good Effects of it.

And is it so? Then, O my God, what Reason have I to be confounded within my own Soul, who, having so often professed that I love thee, have now Reason to question, whether this divine Charity, this holy Love, has been ever truly Master of my Heart! For when I look back, I find all the Powers of my Soul have been under the Management of Self-love, and

and of the Love of this World. Vanity has governed my Senses ; and as for all the Talents and Blessings received from thy Hand, I cannot find, upon examining my Accounts, but that human, selfish, worldly, and vicious Motives, have had the greatest Share in disposing of them. So that instead of having been under the universal Command of thy holy Love, I cannot but with Difficulty discover where this has crept in but for a little Part ; and the great Body of the Actions of my Life, I see, has been influenced, regulated, and even commanded by another Power.

For what can I say of the general Method of my Life, which has been to consult Inclination in whatever has occurred, and to follow this Bent, without thinking of thee, my God ? What can I say of all that which I have done upon the Impulse of Humour and Passion ? What of all that which has had no other Consideration but to comply with the World, and gratify my own Pride ? What of all that which I have done for Interest, and to satisfy a covetous and worldly Spirit ? And what of all that, O God, where I have been led along by the Violence of corrupt, sinful, and vicious Passions, and have had no more REGARD to thy Law, than if I had been an Heathen ? If all this be taken and set aside out of my Life, how very little, O my God, will be left (and I wish any thing) wherein the Love of thee has been the only Mover, and I have had no other Intention but to please thee in doing thy holy Will ?

So very little, that I have Reason, with daily Tears, to lament my unhappy State, in having so many Years lived in the Neglect of the first and greatest of all thy Commands, and gone on so long unmindful of thee, whom I ought to have sought, served, and loved above all Things. For this my great Crime, O God, I now most humbly implore thy Mercy, beseeching thee to have Compassion on this thy poor Servant, for I see and confess my Iniquity is very great ; so that were it not for thy infinite Goodness, which encourages me, I could not, after so intolerable and ungrateful a Neglect, have the Confidence to appear before thee. But now, O blessed God, being invited

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by Mercy, let me find Mercy, and forgive me all my past Sins.

But then, O God of infinite Goodness, confirm this Mercy to me, by communicating such effectual Grace to my Soul, that, for what remains of my Life, I may be faithful in this thy great Command. My Life will be no Blessing to me, if it be continued upon any other Terms: For what can Addition of Days profit me, but only to be more miserable, if it be to the Increase of my Iniquity, in living on forgetful of thee, who art the great End of my Life? Wherefore, O God, I beseech thee, grant me now this one Petition, that, for all the Time I have yet to sojourn upon Earth, I may, by thy Grace, faithfully observe this one Precept of loving thee, my Lord God, with all my Heart and with all my Soul.

O God, who, besides thy Commands, hast furnished me with so many Motives of loving thee, mercifully pour into my Heart the Grace of divine Love, that with Fidelity all my Days I may satisfy this great Duty. Permit me not to lie under any Delusion in this important Point. Let me not depend on any Protestation in Words, or ceremonial Professions: Let me not trust to any Sighs or Tears, or sudden Flights of the Heart: Let me not rest in the Practice of some external Devotions, or in sensible Comforts, or even in the Austerities of a seeming Repentance: For all these are very uncertain Signs, and may easily give Hopes of the Love of God, when there is no such Thing at the Root. Wherefore, O God, I beseech thee to deliver me here from all Mistake. I sincerely desire to love thee, even as thou hast commanded: Grant, O God, that I may possess this divine Treasure; grant I may love thee with all my Heart.

Deliver me, O God, from all violent and sinful Passions. These are the greatest of all Unhappiness, and wherever they have the Possession of the Heart, they generally shut out both the Knowledge and Love of thee. These carry the Heart to Creatures, and give them the Preference to all thy Commands. Wherefore I beseech thee, O God, to fence my Heart against all such Passions; harden my Heart against all such

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Impressions ; give me Grace to stand against them. For behold, O my God, I am more apprehensive of them than of wild Beasts, and desire to fear them more than Death. Shew this Mercy therefore to thy poor Servant, and defend me from them. Let me never be subject to this Tyranny, but let my Heart be always thy Kingdom ; do thou reign and command there for ever ; grant that I be ever thy Servant, and that I love thee with all my Heart.

Deliver me likewise, I beseech thee, from all immoderate Love of any Creatures whatever. I am sensible how prejudicial to Virtue is all Excess of Affection, even where Love, in a due Degree, is innocent and permitted. I know likewise infinite Numbers have been lost, as to all Good, by being bent with too much Eagerness upon Things of this World, and that many are so unhappily blinded by this worldly Spirit, as to trample upon thy Commands, and live on in the Transgression of thy Law, while they profess Piety, and seem to have no Reason to scruple the Method in which they are. Wherefore, O God, being conscious of my own Infirmity, I beseech thee to preserve me from all such immoderate Affections, and Blindness of Passion. Be thou a Guard to all my Desires, and keep my Inclinations within their Bounds. Permit me not to indulge my Inclinations in any Thing that is dangerous, nor to take any such indiscreet Liberties, as may be injurious to the Freedom of my Soul. I know it is my Duty to love thee with all my Heart ; undertake thou for me, I beseech thee, and be my Security, that I never open my Heart to any Thing that is not according to thy Will, or can prejudice the Love I am bound to have for thee.

Deliver me likewise from all Degrees of vicious and corrupt Self-love. I am sensible of the many Dangers of this Evil, and how great is the Blindness it causes in Christians, by leading them into many Sins, contrary to that great Duty which they have of loving thee. Have Mercy on me, I beseech thee, in this Point, and be a Helper to me ; give me Grace to discern all the Subtleties of this Evil, and Strength to stand against them. Permit me not to flatter those

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Inclinations in myself, which are corrupt, and cannot be favoured but by raising an Enemy against my Soul. Suffer me not to be so unwise, O God, in the Concern of Eternity, as to run into Snares to increase the Dangers of it, to be eager in contriving, seeking, and following that which will be my Ruin. And will it not be thus, if I make it my daily Business to indulge that which thou hast commanded me to deny? I protest, O God, my Choice and Desire is to love thee with all my Heart, which thou hast commanded; let it therefore be the Effect of thy holy Grace, that I never love that which is contrary to thee.

Deliver me likewise from all other Corruption and Infirmitie; at least, so far, that I never permit any one whatever to grow upon me, so as to have the Command of my Will, and to lead my Soul Captive after it. All Kinds of Passions, I know, if not prevented by due Care, threaten me with this Subjection; and if I give Way to any of them, it cannot be expected that thy holy Love shall long have the Command of my Heart. Be thou therefore to me a powerful Helper, and since my Profession is to love thee, my God, with all my Soul, give me Grace that I may be ever watchful against all Kinds of Passions and corrupt Inclinations, which are contrary to this my Duty. Grant that I may resist them faithfully, and give me a Perseverance, that I never be tired, but hold on with Patience in this Warfare, on which my eternal Crown depends. Grant me that true Wisdom that I may discern them under all their Disguises, and never favour that which is evil, upon its pretending to be innocent. I confess my Weakness, in being subject to be deceived many Ways; but let thy Mercy now watch over me, and preserve me from all Delusion, that so thy holy Love may for ever have the Command of my Soul.

Deliver me likewise from all immoderate Solitude, and from too great Engagements in worldly Busines. I know how this dissipates the Mind, takes it off from the Thoughts of thee, and wastes all the Spirits upon Earth; so that the Soul has neither Relish nor Life for what belongs to Heaven. Give therefore,

therefore, O God, to thy Servant that true Moderation, as to all worldly Concerns, that, while Necessity obliges me to the World, I may not, however, engage so far, as to be robbed of that Liberty of Spirit which is necessary for the Service and Love of thee. I very well apprehend the Narrowneis of my own Heart, and that I cannot apply it with Eager-ness to any one Thing, but it will be wanting to others. How then can I pretend, O God, to love thee with all my Heart and Mind, if thou doſt not mercifully preserve me from that Excess of worldly Affairs which poſſeſſ, engage, and wholly take up the Mind? Grant therefore that I may be ſo moderate, as to all Things of Earth, that my wholē Heart, my whole Mind and Strength, may have all the Freedom necessary for the Love of thee.

Deliver me likewiſe, O God, from a lazy and ſlothful Mind; from all Tepidity; from Melancholy, Excess of Sadneſſ, and Dejection of Spirit: For these cannot poſſeſſ the Heart, but it muſt be in great Danger of loſing thee. Wherefore, O God, ſince thou haſt commanded me to love thee with all my Heart, mercifully preserve my Heart free from all those Weakneſſes which indiſpoſe it for ſatisfying this great Precept. Grant me a lively and induſtrious Spirit, a chearful, vigorous, and courageous Mind, that I may faithfully perform whatever thou haſt com-manded, ſuffer with Perſeverance whatever thou haſt appointed, and be ever ready in all that thy holy Love demands of me.

Permit not, O Lord, my Heart to be drawn away from thee by the immoderate Love of Company, Di-vertiſements, or Entertainments. I am ſenſible these are ſo many Snares, and no Man can be fond of them without falling under a manifold Guilt; how then can I love thee with all my Heart, if I am in Love with ſuch Things as take my Heart from thee? Preserve me therefore, O God, out of this Snare, and give me that true Wiſdom, that, being obliged to uſe many Things, I may always keep within the Bounds of Moderation, and never run into ſinful Ex-tremes, under the Pretext of doing what is neceſ-fary.

sary. Keep me, O God, amidst all the Dangers of this Life; and though for my Exercise there are many Things which solicit; yet still, I beseech thee, fence my Soul against all such false Charms, and let my Heart be reserved for thee.

And since thou, O God, hast declared, that who-soever has not a true Love for his Neighbour, cannot have a true Love for thee; mercifully preserve in me this Charity to every Neighbour, such as thou hast commanded. Permit no Malice or Ill-will to abide in my Heart. Let no Aversions or Resentments lie there concealed; but may I freely forgive all Injuries, as I desire to be forgiven; and have a Heart ready to do Good to all, without any Reserve. Deliver me, I beseech thee, from all Deceit or Mistake in this important Point, and permit me not here to be false to my Neighbour and to myself. I can have no Hopes here, where thou hast spoken so plain, if I observe not what thou hast said. Grant therefore, O merciful God, that I may love my Neighbour as thou prescribest; for without this I cannot love thee, as thou commandest; and how then can I ever hope to see thy Face?

Look down, I beseech thee, upon me, thy poor Servant; and since I must be for ever an unhappy Creature, if I love thee not with all my Heart, have Pity on me in the difficult Circumstances in which I am. When I consider with myself the many Motives I have to love thee, and how great an Interest I have in loving thee, I then seem to wonder at those who unworthily forsake their God, and resolve with myself, that nothing shall ever take my Heart from thee. But then, O God, such is my Weakness, behold I confess it to thee; other Thoughts no sooner occur to my Mind, but it is with Prejudice to my former Resolution; I presently become unmindful of thee, and there is nothing to which I can turn, but seems to conspire to the Overthrow of all my good Designs. Businesseizes my Mind with too much Eagerness: Idleness takes off the Vigour of it, and exposes it to whatever is unprofitable. Company dissipates my Thoughts, and Solitude often draws them

them into very impertinent Amusements. Mirth makes them light and unfixed, and Sadness often brings them into Bonds. The World fills my Mind with Vanities; and endless Temptations, with great Blindness, are the Effects of conversing with it: And, if I think of separating from its common Ways, here too are other Difficulties to perplex my Thoughts,

Then, O God, how unsettled is my Heart, and how very easy in receiving Impressions from all Kinds of Objects, such as are a Temptation to it, and set it at a Distance from thee, my God? The very Necessities of Life furnish Matter for daily Temptations. There is Temptation in what pleases, and likewise in what displeases. Peace and Trouble, Plenty and Want, Sickness and Health, Friends and Enemies, have all their Temptations in them. And what can I, a poor Creature, do, amidst so many Difficulties, if thou, O God, dost not establish my Heart, and, amidst such Variety of Disturbances, keep it fixed to its eternal Good? Help me therefore, I beseech thee, O merciful God, and grant that I may truly love thee. Grant that the true Love of thee may rule and command my Heart; so that though many Things endeavour to distract it, yet may it still be fixed to thy holy Will, and use no other Liberty, but as thou art pleased to prescribe it. Let this holy Love govern all my Desires and Fears: Let this teach me what I am to seek, and what to avoid: Let this regulate both my Joy and my Tears: Let this preside in all my Councils, and nothing be undertaken but as this shall direct.

By this Love of thee, my God, may my Soul be fixed against all that natural Inconstancy to which it is subject; and by the same may it be secured against all Temptations. By this holy Influence may it be perfected in that necessary Lesson of despising the World, and not being solicitous what Part it has in it, but only of doing what is pleasing in thy Sight. May this holy Flame ever warm my Breast, so that I no more become cold or tepid, in whatever concerns thy Honour or Service; but let a discreet Zeal give

give Life to my Soul, that I may be vigorous in every Duty, faithfully keep all thy Commandments, and neither by my Sloth, Connivance, or Silence, shew any Favour to what is sinful. Let this holy Fire consume in my Heart all vain, corrupt, and dangerous Affections; let me no more be concerned in pleasing the World, seeking its Favour, or gaining its Esteem. Let me no more waste my Soul in following the Suggestions of my own idle and vile Inclinations; nor think it any Happiness to flatter or gratify the Desires of Flesh and Blood.

Grant, I beseech thee, O merciful God, this my Petition; for, since there can be no Hopes of Happiness, but to those alone who love thee; what true Comfort can I possibly have, even in this Life, if I love not thee? What a Confusion must it be to my Soul, if I find it wholly taken up with this World, that by this are moved all its Desires and Fears; that in the Service of this are employed both its Thoughts, its Concerns, and Solicitude; and that in this is the Happiness it seeks! Is it not too plain, that this is loving the World, and worshipping it as an Idol, instead of thee, my God? Where then can my Hopes be? O blessed God, deliver me from this Idolatry. Take the World, I beseech thee, out of my Heart, and take thou the Possession of it; raise there thy Throne, and command there, as thou dost in Heaven, as sovereign Lord. Being created by thee, let me serve thee; being created for thee, let me seek thee; being redeemed by thee, for the regaining the Happiness I had lost, let me love thee. Grant, O God, that by this Love I may be governed, and that I may give Proof of this Love abiding in my Heart, by seeking thee before all Things, and faithfully walking all my Days in thy Commandments.

O God, by whose particular Grace *Noah* and *Lot* continued just and faithful to thee, in the midst of a wicked Generation; grant that, by a like Mercy, I may be preserved from the Corruption of the World, and faithfully serve thee all the Days of my Life.

O God, by whose Grace *Moses* renounced all the Advantages of *Pharaoh's* Court, and chose to be afflicted

flicted with thy People, before the Pleasures of Sin ; grant I may give thy holy Will the Preference to this World, and rather chuse to be deprived of all temporal Conveniencies, than do any thing that is displeasing to thee.

O God, who didst shew thy Judgements on *Hezekias*' Sons ; for consulting their own Interest above thy Law ; mercifully grant, that no Love of Interest, or any other Passion, may prevail in my Heart ; but that thy holy Will and Love may so absolutely there command, that it may be wholly subject ; and nothing be regarded which is not prescribed or approved by thee.

O God, who didst give Grace to *David* to serve thee with a perfect Heart, and, amidst the Distrac-tions of a Court, to be a Man according to thy own Heart ; grant that no worldly Busines may draw my Heart from thee ; but, amidst all the Dissipations and Temptations of this Life, I may ever abide faithful in the Observance of thy Law.

O God, by whose Grace those good Kings, *Heze-
cias* and *Josias* did overthrow all the high Places, break in Pieces the Idols, and root out of the Land whatever was injurious to thy Worship, and was a Breach of thy Commands ; mercifully grant that I may be armed with a like Zeal against all that is in my Heart contrary to thy Law ; that I may overthrow every Idol ; that I may worship, follow, and serve thee alone, my Lord and my God, and love thee with all my Soul.

O God, who didst permit such Blindnes in the People that came to inhabit the Land of *Israel*, as to undertake to serve thee, and, at the same Time, to worship their Idols ; grant, I beseech thee ; that I may never fall under the Blindnes of this People, in pretending to love thee, and yet have my Heart engaged to many Idols. Let all Idols be confounded, and thou alone be my God.

O blessed Jesus, who haft published this great Com-mandment to us, of loving God with all our Heart, with all our Soul, with all our Strength, and with all our Mind ; look upon me, a poor weak Crea-ture,

ture, and by the Merits of thy sacred Passion, obtain for me Grace, that I may be always solicitous to observe this Precept, and that I may never deceive myself with the Hopes of Salvation, if my Heart, upon good Examination, does not bear Testimony of thy holy Love abiding and commanding in it.

O Jesus, who hast declared to us our Duty; that we are to seek first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness; grant I may faithfully follow thy Direction; that I may not deceive myself with repeated and customary Professions of loving thee: But that, in this Point, I may give Proof that I love thee; by making it the first and greatest Business of my whole Life to come to the Possession of thee. Grant, O Jesus, that I may thirst after thy Presence; that I may desire thee above all Things; that I may seek thee before all Things; and that I may not live but for thee and in thee.

O Jesus, who hast declared to us, that no Man can serve two Masters; that we cannot serve God and Mammon; mercifully deliver me from all Delusion in this Affair; and, since my Heart must be the Servant of that which it loves, take out of my Heart, I beseech thee, the Love of the World, and of all that is in it. Let this be reserved for thee alone, that loving thee above all Things, I may serve only thee, my God.

O Jesus, who hast positively pronounced, that he who loves thee keeps thy Commandments; grant that I may have this comfortable Assurance all my Life of thy Love abiding in me. Never suffer me to be so blind as to live in the Breach of thy Precepts, and yet seemingly to be persuaded that I love thee. Words, Protestations and Prayers, are no Proof that I love thee, if I am not careful in keeping thy Law.

O Jesus, who hast published this Truth; that he who loves Father or Mother, Husband or Wife, Children or Lands, more than thee, is not worthy of thee; mercifully grant that all Love to Creatures may be so discreetly moderated in me, that it may be, in every

every Particular, subject to thy Law. Grant that I may have this Satisfaction, that I love thee above all Things; that my greatest Solicitude and Study is to please thee above all Things; and that I prefer thy holy Will and thy Interest before all others. This Assurance may I ever have of thy Love ruling in my Heart.

O Jesus, who didst give Grace to thy Apostles, to forsake all Things for the Love of thee, and hast declared, that only upon this Condition we can become thy Disciples; let it be the Effect of thy Mercy to me, that I fulfil this Condition: Let my Heart be so disengaged from all Creatures, that however I may use them, according to the Necessities of Life, yet I may be always ready to quit them whenever thou commandest, and may ever have my Inclinations to them over-ruled by thy holy Will.

O Jesus, by whose particular Grace *Paul*, thy Apostle, did esteem all the Things of this World as most contemptible Dross, for the great Love he had for thee; grant, I beseech thee, I may have such a Taste of thy Sweetness, that I may think it no Loss to lose all Things of this World, so I can but gain thee. Grant I may be crucified to the World, may be dead to the World, and that I may live to thee alone.

O Jesus, who didst so powerfully draw the Heart of this thy Apostle to thee, that he desired to be dissolved, and be united to thee; grant that the same holy Love may truly possess my Heart, and that my strongest Desires may be to come to thy holy Presence. What have I to desire on Earth, who have a loving God, that calls me to the Possession of himself? Why should my Heart rove amongst Creatures, who have a merciful God, that invites me to him? What is all on Earth, but Corruption and Vanity? And is it not enough to confound thee, my Soul, to see thou art so taken up with these, that thou livest almost in the Forgetfulness of him, who offers to be thy infinite and never-failing Good? Observe by thy Ways, thy Motions, thy Concern, thy Desires, thy daily Thoughts and Solicitude: How are these every Day wasted on Trifles

Trifles and Vanity; and how little is it thou employest them in seeking thy God? And how long, O God, shall I be thus blind and miserable! How long! O blessed Jesus, have Compassion on me, I beseech thee, and manifest now both thy Goodness and Power in me, a poor sinful Creature. Turn my Heart from the Things of this World, and draw it strongly to thee. Permit me no longer to lose myself amongst Things false and deceitful, but now from this Moment convince me, that thou art my only Good; that thou alone art worthy to be served and loved, and that all Things besides are nothing but Vanity and Affliction of Spirit. O merciful God, grant me this Petition, that, for what remains of my Life, I may sincerely love thee, faithfully serve thee, and ever look upon it as my only Happiness; to come to the Possession of thee.

P R A Y E R.

I AM sensible, O God, that Prayer is a Means appointed by thee, by which we are to seek Help of thy infinite Goodness, for the Remedy of all our Wants, both in preventing or removing Evils, and obtaining all Good.

I know likewise, that whilst thou promisest to hear those that pray, as they ought, thou hast declared thy Aversion to such as do otherwise, and that these shall not obtain what they ask.

I know again, that to pray as I ought, I am to have a Sense of thy infinite Majesty; and therefore, as often as I appear before thee, it ought to be with great *Reverence*, as becomes thy Presence. I am to have a Confidence in thy Goodness, and therefore am to pray with *Hope*. I am to have a true Sense of my Wants, and of my Dependance on thee alone; and therefore am to pray with *Earnestness*, *Fervour*, and *Attention*. I am to be possessed with the Knowledge of my own Unworthiness; and therefore am to pray with great *Humility*. I am to have a Heart not engaged in wilful Sin, but sincerely desirous of forsaking all Evils, to which it is unhappily subject; because I have thy own Word, that thou dost not hear Sinners.

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All this I cannot but acknowledge: I confess, these are Truths which I know. And these oblige me to confess other Truths which are already known to thee, my God; Truths which discover my great and manifold Misery, and foretel still greater Misery, if thy Goodness does not mercifully prevent it.

For is it not one great Unhappiness in me, that I often come before thee, without any Sense of thy Presence; and therefore with as little inward or outward Reverence, as if, like an Idol of the Gentiles, thou hadst neither Goodness to relieve our Wants, nor Power to punish our Neglects? When I consider the Homage paid to thy infinite Majesty by the Blessed, above; that those glorious Spirits fall down before thy Throne, giving Honour, and Praise, and Benediction to thy holy Name; that the Cherubims veil their Faces, and the Pillars of Heaven tremble in thy Presence: Then I apprehend something of my Misery, and how criminal it must be in me, a poor, vile, and contemptible Worm, to appear so often before thee, and yet so stupid and unthinking, as neither by my own Unworthiness, nor thy holy Presence, to be awed into any Respect. How long, O God, how long shall I be thus without Sense and Understanding, and lose all the Opportunities of obtaining the Helps of thy Mercy, without which I must certainly perish!

It is another great Reproach to my Soul, that presenting myself so often before thee; and pretending to be miserable under the many Wants I suffer, and, upon this Account, to ask Relief of thy infinite Goodness, I no sooner am in thy Presence, but immediately I lose the Sense of thee and of all my Wants; my Mind is filled with a thousand impudent Thoughts, and so very busy, as if I came before thee for no other End but insolently to let thee know, that I had nothing to say to thee. What other Construction can be put on the undue Liberty, in Time of Prayer, I give to my Thoughts; when every Trifle then takes Place of thee, my God, and no Imagination is so vain and impudent, but it is enough (how shall I say it?) it is enough to thrust thee out of my Mind? And what then must be said of that baser Treachery,

when, in Words addressing my Speech to thee, I am, at the same Time, unworthily entertaining the Devil in my Heart, or, at least, receiving Proposals from him of all that is vain, idle and displeasing to thee? And how often, O God, have I deserved to be driven out of the Temple, with many Scourges, upon this Account?

And, if sometimes I am so present with myself, as to think of what I say to thee in Prayer, is it not again another Fault, that I do this so coldly, and with so little Earnestness, that I seem not concerned, whether thou hearest my Prayers, or grantest what I ask? This shews too plainly that I have not a true Sense of my many Miseries: Since coming with my Petitions to thee, who art my only Helper, I present them to thee with so very little Concern. Earnest Desires, I know, express themselves earnestly in Prayer; and they, that desire nothing, pray for nothing. What then do I, unhappy Creature, shew in my tepid and slothful Prayers, but that I am not serious in desiring what I ask.

Then, again, besides the many Distractions and slothful Performance of my Prayers, how great Sloth is there in coming to them! How many Delays, how frequent Hindrances! Very often Sleep robs me of my Time: Idle Conversation takes it from me: Diversions and Company have the Preference: Impertinent Business puts in, and takes the Place: And how many Put-offs by mere Laziness, upon the Pretext of *Time-enough*, till there be no Time that can be spared from other Affairs? Thus, I must own, it is too often with me, and every Thing is enough to put by this Duty.

And now, O God, being thus miserable, as I am; miserable in so great an Affair on which depends all the Help I am to expect from thee: What must I do, but now this once, at least, endeavour to pray as I ought; and, in this Prayer, beg thy Assistance, that for the future I may be more careful in the Performance of this Exercise; and that, as often as I appear in thy Presence, it may be with due Reverence to thy infinite Majesty, with a firm Hope in thy Goodness, with

with a fervent Desire of obtaining what I ask, and with a Heart watchful against all Distractions, that so my daily Prayér, ascending like Incense in thy Sight, may become as a daily Sacrifice, and be favourably received by thee.

O God, who hast ordained Prayer for our Help, and commanded us to pray; I beseech thee so to prepare my Heart, that I may perform this Exercise in such a Manner as may be acceptable to thee, and effectual for the obtaining of all that Grace which thou knowest to be necessary for me.

Possess my Soul with a sacred Awe of thy Presence, that, whenever I come before thee, my Heart may have a true Sense of thy infinite Power, of thy Greatness and Goodness; and hence may a due Reverence accompany me in all my Prayers. May I then remember, that I am before my God; before him who alone has Power to cast down to Hell, and to raise to Life Eternal: Before him who punishes those that despise him with everlasting Confusion; and offers himself to be their Inheritance, who seek him with an humble Heart.

May I then remember, that I am before a God of infinite Majesty, in whose Presence the Heavens are not pure; that the Cherubims and Seraphims, the Dominations and Powers, with all the heavenly Host, fall down before him; and how then am I, miserable Clay, a poor, unhappy Sinner, to appear in his Presence.

May I then remember, that I come a Criminal before my God and my Judge, whom I have most ungratefully offended; and therefore come with *Trembling*: That I deserve rather to be rejected with Punishment and Shame, than to have my Petitions favourably received; and therefore come with *Fear*: That, if I obtain not the Grant of what I ask, I must be for ever miserable; and therefore come with *Solicitude*.

Let these Thoughts, I beseech thee, work in my Breast, and prepare my Heart as often as I pray; that I may be solicitous to behave myself outwardly with due Reverence, and inwardly with great Attention

when, in Words addressing my Speech to thee, I am, at the same Time, unworthily entertaining the Devil in my Heart, or, at least, receiving Proposals from him of all that is vain, idle and displeasing to thee? And how often, O God, have I deserved to be driven out of the Temple, with many Scourges, upon this Account?

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Let these Thoughts, I beseech thee, work in my Breast, and prepare my Heart as often as I pray; that I may be solicitous to behave myself outwardly with due Reverence, and inwardly with great Attention

tion of Mind, whenever I come into thy holy Temple, or, in my Closet, offer my Petitions to thee.

Wherefore I most earnestly beseech thee, so to confirm me in the perpetual Sense of this my Duty, that I may never do any Thing in Time of Prayer, which may be disedifying, and look like Disrespect. Let my Posture be always decent, as becomes an Offender offering his Petition to his God: Let a fixed Mind keep my Body steady, that I may not be gazing about, nor turning to every Thing that moves. Imprint in my Soul a Fear of conversing and talking there where my only Business is to speak to thee. And grant, I may have a Horror of all Kinds of Curiosity, which, being suggested by Vanity, Idleness, or other Corruption, can serve for nothing but to draw my Heart from thee, my God, and lead it into Sin.

Grant, likewise, I most earnestly beseech thee, that the Attention of my Mind may be such, in Time of Prayer, as becomes this holy Exercise, and may render it acceptable to thee. Deliver me then from all Kinds of vain and impertinent Imaginations; give me Grace to put by, for that Time, all Manner of Busines; let no Sort of Contrivance take up my Thoughts; banish then from my Heart all Degrees of worldly Care and Solitude; quiet all Disturbance; and, if the Devil shall endeavour to perplex my Mind with any Thing that is sinful, grant, O God, I beseech thee, that I may readily, and with Resolution, make Resistance against it, and with new Life turn all my Thoughts to thee.

For this End, I ask of thee, loving Father, to give me a watchful Mind, that I may not permit myself to be surprized and carried away with vain Amusements, much less, O God, with sinful or dangerous Entertainments; but that I may be ever ready, upon their first Approach, to protest against them, and remove them out of my Mind.

It is a melancholy Reflection, I confess, at the End of Prayers, to find, that, coming there to speak to thee, I have been thinking of every Thing else besides thee: That my Mind has been wandering all Ways; and that, if I have had any Glimpse of thy Presence,

it has soon been put by with the next Imagination that occurred. This I cannot think of without Shame; and this my Weakness, I confess, is a Confusion to me, when, by the Help of thy Grace, I with Seriousness look back upon it.

It is true, I often purpose to do better, and begin with such a seeming Resolution as if nothing should be able to disturb me; but, O God, such is my floating and unsteady Mind, that I presently lose the Sight of thee, the only Object of my Prayer, and Earth soon becomes my Business instead of Heaven. This Weakness I heartily wish I could remedy, because it is so dishonourable to thee, my God, and so very injurious to my only great Concern. Help me, therefore, most gracious God, in this Point, that I may pray as I ought, and that, while I come into thy Presence, I may not so easily and so often turn my Back most unworthily upon thee.

Take off this Lightness from my Mind, that it may be more steady in what it undertakes; that it may no more be so giddy as to take Notice of every flying Fancy, and let this be enough to carry it away from its greatest Business, and even from its God. If a Servant should, upon such Trifles, quit any Business of Moment which I had recommended to him, how should I be provoked! And yet, while this is my daily Practice, I call myself thy Servant, and pretend to be faithful to thee. Remedy, O God, this Carelessness, this Inconstancy: Work this Change in my Soul, that I may amend what I cannot bear in others without Anger, nor see in myself without Shame.

Let my Heart be fixed on thee, I beseech thee, in Time of Prayer; and may I then be convinced that my only Business is with thee, my God; that whatever else occurs is, at that Time, no better than Impertinencies and Trifles, such as deserve not to be regarded; and that, if I attend to them, I unworthily forsake my Cause. For this End I earnestly beg of thee, to take from me all Kinds of Solicitude and Disquiets, and compose my Mind; that, being free from a restless and roving Spirit, I may, with Peace and Attention, send up my Desires to Heaven,

and, with Freedom of Mind, converse with thee, my God.

Not that I can hope, in this imperfect State, to be totally free from Distractions. I know my own Corruption, and the Malice of the Devil will not give this Rest; but mercifully grant, that I may not wilfully be carried away with their Suggestions, nor weakly give Entertainment to any Thoughts or Temptations that then come to disturb me. No, my God, far be this from me: What I ask is, that thou then stand by me, and confirm me against all Kinds of Distractions; that, by the Help of thy Grace, I may resolutely cast them from me, and as often recal my Thoughts to thee. In this, O God, let me never be tired; for though there be no Comfort in such Prayer, where the Mind is perplexed with frequent Disturbances; yet, to be courageous and patient, in making Defence against them, is a good Christian's Part, and such as will recommend him to thy favourable Protection. O God, in this may I always be constant.

Another Favour I ask of thee, O Father of Mercy, that, as often as I come to Prayer, I may not only have a recollected Mind, but likewise such a Fervour of Spirit, as may give Life to my Petitions, and render them acceptable in thy Sight. Remove therefore, I beseech thee, all Heaviness and Coldness from me, and let me always remember, that, if I am not earnest in asking, I cannot expect from thee to grant what I ask.

I confess it, O God, to be a great Stupidity to have a Busyness of Eternity upon my Hands, and yet to manage and solicit it with so much Coldness, as if it were a Matter of Indifference which Way it went. And it is yet more surprising, to be in Danger of perishing everlastingily, and yet to ask for Help with no more Concern than if there were no Inconvenience in being denied. This, I own, is too often my Case; and now, O God, I ask thy Grace, that I may no longer go on thus unhappy, and yet so insensible of my Unhappiness, as there to be careless and unconcerned, from whence is to be expected my only Help.

I beseech

I beseech thee, that the Sense of thy awful Presence, who hast equal Power both to reward and punish, may raise up my cold and tepid Soul; and that, as often as it lies dull and heavy in Time of Prayer, it may be quickened by the Thoughts of Eternity, whose Lot cannot fall well if there be no more Care in preventing a Miscarriage. For, what canst thou do, my Soul, under all that Corruption, those manifold Infirmities, the Weight of thy past Sins, and the continual Danger of falling into new ones? Hast thou any Help or Confidence in thyself? Alas! my God, what am I? I confess my whole and only Expectation is from thee alone; and I here, with all the Earnestness of my Soul, implore thy Grace, that, as often as I come to pray, the Knowledge of this undoubted Truth may give Force to my Prayers; and that, shaking off all Kinds of Sloth, I may earnestly desire and fervently ask thy Help.

I easily observe with how great Importunity they ask for Relief, who feel the Want of Necessaries for Life. I cannot but see with how true a Concern I cry out for Help, when any Kind of worldly Danger threatens. Nay, I must confess, I find myself eager, lively, and vigorous in all the Affairs of Earth. In Business I am earnest; in Family Concerns I am lively; in all Things of Interest I am solicitous; in following the World and its Modes I am industrious; in gaining my own private Ends I am watchful; in gratifying my Inclinations and Appetite I take Pains; in pursuing my Games and Divertisements I am eager: Thus, whatever Way I turn, as to this World, I see I want no Life or Vigour; and only then, O God, when I come before thee, when I come to pray, then only am I dull and heavy, and seem like a lifeless Clod.

And what a Reproach, O blessed God, what a criminal Reproach must this be to my Soul, when, at the last Hour, it shall be presented before thee, if thy Mercy does not remedy this my Weakness! Help me therefore, I beseech thee, O God of Mercy, and give me a true Sense of all my spiritual Wants; that, whenever I come before thee, whose Goodness encourages us to ask, I may beg for the Blessings of Eternity with

greater Importance than they who beg for Bread. Grant I may have a true Apprehension of the Danger of Hell-fire; and that my Petitions, for being delivered, may have such Fervour in them, as may bear some Proportion to the Greatness of the Evil. Possess my Soul with the true Value of all that is Eternal, and that my daily Solicitude in seeking it may exceed all that which I experience in myself, every Day, in temporal Affairs; and permit me not, I beseech thee, any longer, to be lively and vigorous in following Trifles, and there only to be without Life where Eternity is concerned. Grant this, my Petition, O merciful God, that my Conscience may no longer lie under the Reproach of my usual Sloth and Injustice.

But if, by the secret Counsel of thy Providence, thou shalt, at any Time, leave my Soul dry and barren, so that, notwithstanding all my Endeavours, it shall still continue without Comfort, blessed be thy Name under this Dispensation; but mercifully, at that Time, I beseech thee, to support my Soul, that it fall not into Impatience or Dejection, nor admit any Thoughts of desisting from the Exercise of Prayer, upon the Apprehension of its being fruitless. No, my God, let me look upon all these Suggestions as the Temptations of the Enemy, and therefore have no farther Regard to them than to lay them by. And, for the Duty of Prayer, grant I may be ever constant in it, even when void of all Comfort, and that thou seemest neither to bless my Endeavours, nor to give Ear to my Petitions: For I know that, even then, my Desires, my Sighs, my Patience, and my Endeavours may be very acceptable before thee, when thou seemest to be far from me, and I can find no Relish in all I do. As often, therefore, as thou shalt permit me to fall under this Trial, I beseech thee, to have Compassion on my Weakness, and grant me, at that Time, great Patience, and Discretion, that so I may make Advantage by what I suffer.

Another Petition I most humbly make to thee, O God, to defend me from the Sin of the Pharisees, that I never desire to be seen at my Prayers, so as to think
of

of being esteemed by Men on this Account, and feed my Vanity with that which ought to be a pure Offering to thee. This must be a strange Presumption for Self-love thus to take Coals and Incense from the Altar; and as strange a Madness, there to provoke thy Displeasure, and offend thee, where I pretend to sue for Mercy. Strengthen me therefore, I beseech thee, by thy Grace, that, being ever watchful against all the Approaches of this pharisical Evil, I may carefully suppress it, and direct all my Prayers purely to thee, proposing nothing more, besides the Glory of thy holy Name, and opening the Treasures of thy Goodness upon my Soul, for the Relief of those my manifold Necessities to which I am subject.

Grant, likewise, that my great and principal Solitude, in Time of Prayer, may be to pray well, and not to huddle over such a Number of Prayers, as if the Number and Length of them were the only Things to which thou hadst any Regard. Rather let it be my constant Care, that my Prayer ascend like Incense from an humble Heart; and that whatever I do be done well; for thou, O God, hast given me sufficient Encouragement in this in declaring thy Acceptance of the slender Offering of a Pair of Turtles from their Hands, whose narrow Circumstances will not permit them to lay on thy Altars a greater Sacrifice; and that a spotless Lamb is much the better Offering than many Oxen which are diseas'd, deform'd, or lame.

But, above all Things, grant, O God, I beseech thee, that my Heart be clean in thy Sight; and that, while I offer Prayers to thee, I may not be under thy Displeasure for any past or present Sins. Thou hast sufficiently declared thy Abhorrence to those who honour thee with their Lips, but have their Hearts far from thee. What Fruit, therefore, can I expect from appearing frequently in thy Presence, or joining with thy Faithful in thy most solemn Worship, or from my Sighs, my Tears or Prayers, if my Heart, lying under the Engagements of wilful Sin, is not yet resolved to break its Chains, and seek thy Mercy, by returning to a better State? All this can be no better than Mockery, such as may provoke, but cannot be the Means of obtaining thy Favour.

Deliver me, therefore, I beseech thee, at all Times, from this Blindness; and, whatever my Unhappiness may have been to offend thee, mercifully grant that I may not continue obstinate in Sin, nor live on in a State which I know to be displeasing to thee: For, what can be the End of this, but Death? But, whenever I come to Prayers, let it be with a Heart sensible of my Iniquity, solicitous to be truly converted to thee, and humbly suing for Mercy. If I approach with this Disposition, daily lamenting all my Miseries, and sincerely petitioning to be strengthen'd by thy Grace; then I cannot but hope in thy Promises made to those that call upon thee, and that, in the Multitude of thy tender Mercies, I shall find the good Effect of my Prayers.

O blessed God, who hadst Respect to the Offering of *Abel*, and didst receive his Sacrifice, mercifully grant that, as often as I come to Prayers, it may be with the inward Disposition of *Abel*; and that, like his Offering, they may find Acceptance in thy Sight.

O God, who didst hear the Prayer of *Moses*, and, upon his Petition, didst spare the Children of *Israel*; teach me, I beseech thee, to pray like *Moses*, and mercifully hear my Prayer.

O God, who didst hear the Prayer of *Samuel*, and, upon his Petition, didst overthrow the *Philistines*; teach me, I beseech thee, to pray like *Samuel*, and hear me, as often as I beg thy Assistance to be deliver'd from all my Enemies.

O God, who didst hear the Prayer of *Elias*, and, upon his Petition, didst send Rain and Plenty; teach me, I beseech thee, to pray like *Elias*, and hear me as often as I pray for thy Blessings.

O God, who didst hear the Prayer of *Hezekias*, and, upon his Petition, didst raise him from Death, and add to the Number of his Days; teach me, I beseech thee, to pray like this good King, and give Ear to my Petitions as often as I beg Blessings of thee.

O God, who didst hear the Prayer of *Daniel*; give me Grace that I may pray like him, and hear my Prayer.

O God, who didst hear the Prayer of *Jonah*; give me Grace that I may pray like him, and hear my Prayer.

O God,

O God, who didst hear the Prayer of *Judith*? give me Grace to pray like her, and hear my Prayer.

O God, who didst hear the Prayer of *Susannah*? give me Grace to pray like her, and hear my Prayer.

O God, who didst hear the Prayer of *Ezher*? give me Grace to pray like her, and mercifully hear my Prayer.

O blessed Jesus, who wast pleased to teach thy Apostles how to pray, and us in them; mercifully pour forth into my Heart the true Spirit of Prayer, and grant that, as often as I shall say that holy Prayer, it may be with the Reverence due to thee, the Author, and repeat it with the same Spirit with which it was composed.

O Jesus, who, by thy Example hast taught us how to pray, and, by abiding all Night in Prayer on the Mount, hath shewed us the great Importance of this Exercise to us; mercifully grant, that by the due Consideration of what thou hast done for our Example, I may be always convinced of the Necessity of Prayer, and ever solicitous to pray as thou hast taught us.

O Jesus, who, in thy Gospel, hast assured us of the infinite Goodness of thy heavenly Father, and promised that they who ask shall receive; grant that I may always ask in such a Manner as to experience this Goodness of God, and the Truth of thy Promises, in the Success of my Petitions, and in obtaining such Blessings as thou knowest most necessary for my eternal Good.

O Jesus, who, in the Person of the Publican, hast taught us how to pray; grant, I beseech thee, that as often as I appear before thee, it may be with the Reverence, the Humility, the Contrition and Fervour of this poor Penitent, and that, like him, I may find the Effect of thy Goodness in the Grant of my Petitions.

O Jesus, who hast taught us the sure Method of prevailing with Heaven, by asking with *Faith*, and *in thy Name*; grant, I beseech thee, that my Prayers may alwaye be accompanied with a firm Faith in God, and that whatever *Loss* may be with an entire Confidence in thee.

O Jesus, who, in several Parables, hast informed us, how effectual it is to importune Heaven with instant Prayer;

Prayer; give me that Spirit of Fervour and Patience, that I may pray with Earnestness, and never be tired with sending up my Desires to thee. Let me always be easy under all my Dispensations, and leave it to thee to grant at any Time what I ask in mine.

O Jesus, who didst reprove the Sons of Zebedee, for not knowing what they asked; mercifully grant that I may ask nothing but what may be to the Glory of thy Name. And, if I pray for any thing which thou knowest will be injurious to my eternal Good, let it be the Effect of thy Mercy to deny me.

O Jesus, who hast undertaken to be our Advocate to the Father, grant I may never think of having any Access to the Father but through thee; let my Hope of obtaining what I ask, be entirely in the Merits of thy Passion. And now let thy sacred Wounds plead for me, that I may truly understand this Duty of Prayer, that I may be punctual in the Practice, and always in such a Manner, that it may find Acceptance in the Sight of God, to his Glory, and the Salvation of my own Soul. Obtain for me, that I be delivered from all Neglects and Tepidity, and that, for the future, I never be so unhappy, that my Prayer be so unduly performed, as to become a Sin to me.

R E P E N T A N C E.

I Acknowledge, O God, that while I am so miserable and unworthy, as to deserve nothing but to be cast out, and for ever banished from thy Sight, thy Mercy still abounds, and calls aloud after me to return from all my evil Ways, and to accept of that Happiness which has been purchased for me by the Blood of thy only Son. This thy infinite Goodness appears wonderfully in the Offer thou makest to all Sinners of receiving them into thy Favour, notwithstanding all their past Unworthiness, if they shall forsake their evil Ways, repent from their Heart of their Iniquities, and be sincerely converted to thee. This Mercy, O God, I acknowledge with all Humility, I bow down and adore, prostrate to the Ground; and it is what I desire to lay hold on, as my only Dependance, on which I build all the Hopes I have of being rescued from the Punishment due

due to my Sins, and coming to the Possession of thee, my God.

But being sensible of my own Weakness, and that there are many Ways by which I am apt to deceive myself; nay, having too great Reason to fear that I have often deceived myself in this Point, and presumed of having obtained thy Mercy, when I have performed some ceremonial Part, but have been far from the Truth of Repentance; therefore, O God, I come before thee this Day, to beg Pardon for all past Neglects of this Kind, and, with all the Earnestness of my Soul, to implore thy gracious Assistance, that, for the Time to come, I may be subject to no Mistakes in this great Affair; but that, as often as, through thy Grace, I propose to repent and make my Peace with thee, I may do it so truly from my Heart, and with that sincere Conversion, as to obtain Pardon of my Sins, and be received into the Protection of thy Mercy.

Wherefore, I beseech thee, O God, in the first Place, to open my Understanding by the Light of the Holy Spirit, that I may have a true Knowledge of my Sins; that I may see them all in their proper Deformity, with every evil Circumstance belonging to them. The Experience I have had of my own deceitful Nature, obliges me to press this Petition with Earnestness. For, I confess, O God, that my Passions very often are so prevailing, that they blind my Understanding; so that being engaged in several Disorders, and dangerous Indiscretions, which are observable to others, I, who am most concerned, am the only Person that do not see them. Thus Covetousness, and a worldly Spirit, are forward in putting a plausible Cover upon many Frauds, upon Usury and Injustice, so to conceal the Deformity of them from my Sight. Sensuality, Pride, and the Love of Company, disguise not only Snares but Sins; and faulty Omissions of all Kinds of Duties are painted over with such artificial Reason, that I very often discover not the Deceit.

This being one Part of my Weakness, how easily may I live on in Sin, and even then be nourishing within my Breast what is most displeasing to thee, when I pretend to repent of all my Sins, if thou, O God,

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dost not mercifully prevent it, by delivering me from this Blindnes, and communicating to my Soul a better Light? Give ear therefore, I beseech thee, to this my Petition, and according to the Multitude of thy most tender Mercies, shew Favour to me, in the Grant of what my extreme Poverty obliges me to ask. Bring to my Remembrance all my Iniquities, by which I have provoked thy Majesty, and let no Sort of Passion put any Disguise upon them. Let them be present before me, in their proper Colours, and suffer me not, under the Cover of Innocence or Right, to entertain any Kind of Iniquity within my Heart, or go on in the Practice of what is really sinful, or dangerous to my Soul. Grant me this Knowledge, I beseech thee, and, whatever otherwise my Ignorance may be, let me be wise in this one Point, that I be no longer a Secret to myself. O Jesu, who art the Light of the World, remove all Darknes from my Soul, that, having a true Sight of my Sins, I may be so far prepared to repent of them, and find Mercy with thee.

And let not this Mercy; O God, be obstructed by my Sloth or Neglect. For I have Reason to fear, that many Times, influenced by these, I take not due Care in calling myself to an Account, and examining into the true State of my Conscience; and hence many Sins may be hidden from me, which might be discovered by a more diligent Search. And how then can I reasonably expect the Assistance of a divine Light, who lie under willful Darkness; because I will not take Pains to see? Such Sloth then I must consider as a great Impediment of thy Grace; it being certainly very provoking for a Soul to be then under the Command of Sloth, when it pretends itself a Criminal, and ought to be solicitous not to omit any thing which can help to the obtaining that Grace of which it must own itself unworthy while it is seeking it.

Secure me likewise against the Dangers of another Extreme, that is, against all excessive Solicitude in calling myself to an Account; for though Neglect be much the greater Fault, yet I am sensible, that Anxiety of Mind is a very great Hindrance, and that it is almost impossible for a Person to discover the true State
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of his Soul, who admits of this Disquiet. All that is immoderate is injurious to Reason, and nothing more disables it than immoderate Fear; a Passion which creates Monsters, and, with its surprizing Alarms, frights the Mind from that Quiet which is necessary for thinking and seeing Things aright. How great then must the Indiscretion be, of letting this disturbing Passion into the Soul, which puts all into Disorder, and this at a Time when a Busines of Eternity is to be considered, and a quiet composed Mind is most necessary for considering it aright, and making a true Judgement of it?

O God, who knowest all my Weakness, have Compassion on me in this Point, and mercifully help me where my Infirmity proves injurious to the great Affair of my Soul. As far as I can discover of myself, I hope my Desires both of Repentance, and of faithfully serving thee, are sincere; and I hope I neither obstinately, nor affectedly do any Thing which hinders the Effect of these my good Desires. But if thou, O God, seest that I deceive myself, and that through Pride, Humour, Affectation, or Self-conceit, I am injurious to myself, in the Loss of many considerable Advantages to my Soul; behold I here freely renounce, and condemn them, as Evils not to be indulged, or tolerated; I humbly beseech thee to give me a true Light to discern them, and Strength of Grace, whereby I may resolutely and constantly stand against them.

Hear me, O God, I beseech thee, and leave me not to my own Weakness. So long Experience as I have had of myself, gives me too great Reason to suspect some great Fault or Indiscretion in what I do; and what Confidence can I have of myself, while I know not what my Infirmity is? Behold therefore, acknowledging my only Help to be in thee, O God, I resign the whole Concern of my Soul into thy Hands, without any Reserve, and most humbly beseech thee, to do with me whatever thou knowest necessary for my Cure. If Pride or Self-conceit be the Occasion of my Ill-management, root them out, and mercifully deliver me from them. If Humour or Affectation lie concealed, and are a Snare to me, thou art able to correct them; say but the Word, and they will obey. If there

there be any other Weakness, help me in it, I beseech thee, and suffer it not to prevail: Let me not be so blind as to give Ear to its Suggestions, and to be governed by it, much less to favour it so as there to refuse the Obedience, where by thy holy Ordinance I am commanded to obey. This, I confess, would be a great Misfortune, for what can be more to be dreaded, than to take that for my Council and Guide which I ought to fear as an Enemy, and to let this lead me contrary to thy holy Will? What must be the ill Consequences of this Conduct, if I am so blind! thou knowest, O God, how it is with me: Have Compassion therefore on me, according to my Necessities, and mercifully deliver me from all Blindness and Weakness whatever they be.

But besides this, I have another Petition in this important Affair, and that is, that, whenever I seek for Pardon of my Sins, I may not deceive myself with any false and counterfeit Sorrow, but may have such a sincere Contrition as may prevail with thee for shewing Mercy to a poor unhappy Sinner, and receiving me into thy Favour.

This I have Reason to ask with all the Powers of my Soul, because I have many Fears that bring all my past Repentance into Doubt. Sometimes I fear that the Confession of my Sins has been without any serious Endeavours, for being heartily sorry for the great Offences I have committed against thee. And that, all my Thoughts having been taken up in examining into the State of my Soul, I have either forgotten or neglected to beg Pardon for my Iniquities, and, by humble Contrition, to sue for thy Mercy.

Sometimes I fear that all my Sorrow for Sin has been no more than a Form of Words, in hastily running over such Prayers as I have found in Books, but without thinking that true Contrition is not a Profession of the Lips, but a real Change of the Heart, abhorring Sin, and converted to God; in which Part I have been so little solicitous, that there seems too much Reason to dread, that my Repentance has seldom reached the Heart.

At other Times I fear I have very much failed in this Duty, by not considering that true Repentance is

is thy Gift, O God ; and for want of duly considering it, have taken so little Pains in asking it, that I can scarce think thou hast granted what has scarce been asked. And how many other Times have I been mistaken in this Affair, whilst, finding a sensible Trouble in my Heart, I have presently judged this to be the Sorrow of true Repentance, and hence have gone on without Scruple ? But now more Experience has raised great Difficulties in this Point, and makes me doubt whether all that former Sorrow was any more than a natural Trouble upon the undertaking a Work which Nature disliked, and therefore could not be submitted to without Disturbance. And if this has been the greatest Occasion of my past Sorrow, when my Sins were to be acknowledged, how have I deceived myself, and how far have I been from the Trouble of an humble and contrite Heart !

There is still another very considerable Head, upon which my past Repentance is brought into question. For it being now evident to me that where Repentance is sincere and from the Heart, there must be an Ahhorrence of Sin, as of the greatest of all Evils. There must be sincere Resolutions of making War against it ; and, in Proof of these Resolutions being sincere, these ought to be followed with suitable Endeavours, such as, considering the Difficulty of the Evil, ought to be proportioned to it, and hence give reasonable Hopes of overcoming it. This must be, where the Repentance is from the Heart.

And must it be so ? Then, O God, how great Reason have I to suspect what is past ? For when I have laid open my Sins before thee, and protested to have been sorry for them, how many Times have I done this, without ever thinking afterwards how to amend them ? And if sometimes I have had such good Thoughts, how soon have these vanished without any Fruit ? And how seldom can I say with Truth, that I have been truly solicitous to overcome my Evils, and contrived all Ways by which I might probably be secured against falling into them again ? Alas, my frequent Relapses, my Passions not yet subdued, the evil Customs in which I still go on, the Love of the World
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and of Vanity, which so much prevail in my Heart, the great Sloth and wilful Neglects to which I am every Day subject, are too plain Evidence against me, that I have not taken due Care to reform my Life, and consequently bringing into question all former Repentance. Give me Reason to fear that it has been no more than counterfeit or ceremonial, but not sincere.

Having so many Exceptions in this weighty Matter, upon which all depends, I think I have great Reason every Day to humble myself before thy divine Majesty, in Acknowledgement of all such Miscarriages; and every Day to endeavour, by the most serious Repentance and sincere Contrition, to supply such Defects, that so, at the last Day, I may not find that great and terrible Account standing in full against me, which indiscreetly I presumed to be cancelled. And if there be sufficient Motives for this, there must certainly be as great Reason to implore thy Grace, O God, that for the future I go no more on under these Mistakes, but that my Repentance may be every way sincere, so as effectually to obtain thy Mercy.

O God, who hast promised to receive all such Sinners into thy Favour as shall forsake their evil Ways, and be truly converted to thee; look upon me with Mercy, and so strengthen me by thy Grace, that as often as I shall profess to repent of my Sins, it may be so truly from my Heart, as forthwith to renounce all Evil, and to undertake such Methods as may be effectual against all Relapses, and restore me to thy lasting Peace.

Let me always remember that true Contrition for Sin, is thy Gift, O God, and that I cannot expect it, except it comes from thee. Let thy Grace then, at such Times push me on, and make me both earnest in asking it, and solicitous to obtain it. Suffer me not, I beseech thee, to be prevailed on by Sloth, or pretended Business, to omit this necessary Duty, or shorten that Time in which I am to perform it. Let nothing of the Pharisee then be found in me, so as to be contented with the bare Recital of Prayers, or striking the

the Breast ; for what can these move thee, who hast no Regard but to what comes from the Heart ?

But let my Heart, O God, be first moved ; let my Heart, as the first great Spring, be first moved with the most earnest Desires of obtaining a sincere Conversion and true Contrition from thee, the Author of all Good. And let the Strength of this first great Motion move all that is depending on it ; from this let my Eyes be moved, and flow with Tears ; let my Breath be moved ; and break forth into Sighs ; let my Tongue be moved, and cry aloud to thee in Prayer ; let my Hands be moved in being lifted up to thee ; or, by striking the Breast, giving Testimony of that Unworthiness which the Heart professes ; let my whole Body, joining with my Soul, be moved, and bowing down to the Ground, with a profound Humility, adore thee, on whom its whole Good depends ; and at the same Time acknowledge its Misery, by which it is rendered unworthy of receiving what it asks, and in this confess, that all must be the Effect of thy pure Mercy. Thus, O God, let Body and Soul concur, where both are equally concerned ; and let both join in suing for Mercy, where both have been confederate in provoking thy Justice against them.

If ever I am to be in earnest, I beseech thee, that I may be so here, because I am sensible, that on the Sincerity of my Contrition or Repentance depends my eternal State. I know it will avail me nothing to acknowledge myself a Sinner, and to confess my manifold Iniquities before thee, if I do not repent of them from my Heart ; for all the rest is but a Ceremony and Mockery, if this be omitted or neglected. Here then, O God, let thy special Grace move me, and let it be the Effect of this Grace, to make me not only truly solicitous for obtaining the Gift of Contrition from thee, but likewise laborious in taking Pains for obtaining it. For to what Purpose will it be to be earnest in other Things which are not of this Concern, if, coming to this, I pass it over with Contempt, or at least in such a careless and slothful Manner, as if I had no Interest in its being done well ?

Help

Help me, O God, I beseech thee, in this Particular, and if ever thou wilt shew Mercy to me, an unworthy Sinner, let it be in granting this Petition, that I may not be negligent in performing this Duty, but by a hearty Repentance may partake of thy Mercy, whenever, through my Unhappiness, my Sins have divided me from thee, my God. Suffer me not to go on with my Sins when I undertake to repent of them; but let such a real Abhorrence of my Offences possess my Heart, that I may hate them as Things most hateful to thee, and fly from them, as from the Enemies of my Soul, and the Contrivers of my Damnation.

For this End, I beseech thee, let the Power of thy Grace carry me on in the Ways of sincere Repentance; and when, in the Confession of my Sins, I seek to thee for Mercy, make me then sensible that it is my indispensable Duty to use my best Endeavours for avoiding all Sin. Let it be then my great Solitude, to consider how I may avoid those in particular to which I am most subject. Let me then be convinced, that I cannot be sincere in my Desires and Purposes of avoiding Sin, if I do not avoid the Occasions of Sin. Wherefore, I beseech thee then to quicken my Soul with such a vigorous Grace, that I may break through all the Difficulties of Nature, of Corruption, and of Custom, and with a generous Contempt, trample all that under my Feet, which puts me in Danger of relapsing into my former Sins.

Let me then remember, that all is to be given for Heaven; and that if there be any Thing I cannot forsake, for becoming faithful to thee, it is an evident Proof, that my Humility, Confession, and Repentance, are all Deceit. For how can there be Sincerity, in my pretending to amend, when I see where all my Misfortune lies, and will not take Pains to remove it? This, I know, requires great Strength of Mind, while all that is in me, with Violence draws the other Way. But what then, Nature must yield to Duty, where true Repentance commands the Heart; and whatever the Struggle be, nothing must be tolerated which

which is not consistent with the Amendment proposed.

For how can I with Truth say that I love God, and will be faithful to him, if there be any Thing criminal so pleasing to me, that I will not renounce it, or not take the Paths to overcome it, though I see it almost daily is the Occasion of my offending God? It is too true, in this Case, I cannot deny it; whatever my Profession of Repentance be, I do not repent; and though I say I love God, I am in Reality so far from loving him, that he is not a God to me; but that Thing I make my God, which I love above God, and for the Sake of which I am disobedient to the Will of God, and transgress his Law. This is my Idol, and must not this be a dreadful State, to be then committing Idolatry, when I pretend to repent of my Iniquities, and to make my Peace with thee!

O God, I beseech thee, let thy powerful Grace prevent in me this Abomination; let me never have a Part in this detestable Hypocrisy; for it must be much the lesser Evil to die in my Sins, than thus to add to my Iniquities, by Lying and Deceit, and by sacrilegiously abusing thy Tribunal of Mercy. But, O most gracious Fountain of Goodness, let neither of these be my unhappy Fate; but let thy Grace so touch my Heart, that I may not only propose a true Repentance, but undertake it in earnest, and carry it on with that Resolution and Constancy, as not to desist till I have broken all my Chains, subdued all my Enemies, and brought my whole Life to the Model of the Gospel.

For effecting this great Work, let my Dependance be not in myself, but in thee, my God, who alone art able to help me. Give me therefore, I beseech thee, that true Christian Resolution, which will neither be tired nor discouraged with Difficulties, but will every Day be renewed for accomplishing the Work it has undertaken. Give me that true Constancy, by which I may go on steadily amidst all the Assaults of the Devil, the World, and my own Corruption, all united in one Interest against me. Give me that true Perseverance, that I may pursue my Cause, whatever I am

to suffer in it: That although I am to separate from what most pleases me, quit the best Conveniencies of Life, lose Interest and Friends, retire from all that is delightful to me: Although I am to suffer the severest Contradictions of Nature, and by Violence break ill Customs; yet, O God, may I still hold on, true to my Undertaking, and think all to be Gain, so I can but recover from that Unhappiness which has been the Effect of my Sins.

Hence I make it my humble Petition to thee, to enlighten my Understanding, that I may not only have a true Sense of my Sins, but likewise see all that is necessary to be done for my Amendment. And here, I beseech thee, let neither Custom, nor the Authority of others, nor the Love of the World, or myself, or any other Passion deceive me, either by concealing my Duty, or by finding Reasons for dispensing with me in it; but mercifully lay my whole Duty before me, and give me a full View of all the Obligations which are to be satisfied, as the necessary Conditions of a sincere Repentance. Then add but to this Knowledge, such Grace as may be effectual for doing what I know: And then, O God, how happy shall I be in arising from all the Slavery of Sin, and regaining that true Liberty which belongs to the Children of God.

O God, who didst promise to thy People, that if they would return to their Duty, observe thy Laws, and keep thy Precepts, thou wouldst be their God, and forgive them all their Iniquities; mercifully direct me in this Way of seeking thee, and grant that, never admitting any false Hopes of Pardon, I may be always solicitous to be faithful in thy Law, and upon this Condition expect Forgiveness.

O God, who didst require of thy People to take away their Idols and strange Gods, and to serve thee alone, with all their Hearts, that so they might partake of thy Mercy and Protection; lead me on, I beseech thee, in this Way of finding Mercy, and let me be always convinced, that all Hopes of Forgiveness are deceitful, as long as I have any Idol which is not removed. Teach me, O God, to destroy all Idols, that I may seek, serve, and love thee with all my Heart.

O God,

O God, who didst call upon thy People to turn to thee with all their Hearts in Fasting, in Weeping, and Mourning, to rend their Hearts and not their Garments, to depart from all their Wickedness, and repent of their Sins; mercifully grant I may hear thy Voice, and no other Ways expect the Pardon of my Sins, but by doing as thou hast prescribed. Mercy and Forgiveness are wholly in thy Hands, how wretchedly then must I be deceived, if I think to find them without observing the Conditions which thou hast ordained! Deliver me, O God, from this Delusion, and may I always seek thee, as thou hast promised to be found.

O God, who in *Cain* hast shewed us an Example of Despair, grant that his Misfortune may be my Instruction, and that I may be ever afraid of what was his Ruin. I confess my many Fears and Dejections, upon the Sight of my great Unworthiness; but, O God, preserve me under this Weakness, and let the Sense of thy infinite Mercy support me, both living and dying, against all Despair. Let me distrust myself, who am so poor and miserable; but, O God, let me never have a Distrust of thee, whose Mercies are above all thy Works.

O God, who in *Pharaoh* hast shewed us an Example of a false Repentance, to the great Provocation of thy Judgements; mercifully preserve me from all such Deceit. It is a Terror to me to think, how often I have pretended to repent, and yet have soon again, like *Pharaoh*, returned to my Sins. And how unhappy may be the State of my Soul upon this Account, is only known to thee, O God. But mercifully forgive me all my past Weakness, I beseech thee, for the Sake of thy only Son; and for the future so strengthen me by thy Grace, that I may no more deceive myself with a counterfeit Repentance; but so truly repent, as to forsake all my evil Ways, and be faithful in observing the Covenant which I make with thee.

O God, who in thy Servant *David* hast shewed us how great is thy Mercy, and how powerful is with thee the Repentance of an humble Heart; vouchsafe, I beseech thee, to give me a true Sense of my Iniquities,

Iniquities, and that, as often as I confess them before thee, it may be with such a sincere Repentance as was that of *David*, who no sooner confessed his Crime, but he had the Assurance of its being forgiven. O that my Heart, O God, were thus truly converted to thee, when with my Lips I confess my Sin !

O God, who in *Manasses* and the *Ninevites* hast given us Demonstration how much Sinners, doing Penance for their Iniquities, prevail with thee, to the disarming thy Anger, and changing it into Mercy ; shew this Mercy to thy Servant, that, in the Method of those repenting Sinners, I may always seek Forgiveness. Suffer me not to trust in deceitful Protestations, but, I beseech thee to give me such an Abhorrence of Sin, that I may pursue it as the *Ninevites* did, and, in the Severity of the Punishment, both give Proof of my Aversion to it, and make Nature afraid of returning again to that which costs it so dear.

O blessed Jesus, who camest to call all Sinners to Repentance, obtain this Grace for me, that I may always repent of my Sins in such a Manner, that I may be of the Number of those who find Mercy with thee.

O Jesus, by the Effect of whose Mercy *Mary Magdalene* so truly repented of her Crimes, that of a great Sinner she became the Favourite of Heaven; mercifully grant, that by a like Conversion I may renounce all my Sins, and find thee my Advocate against all Accusers.

O Jesus, by whose gracious Look *Peter* called his Sin to Remembrance, and by whose Mercy he repented of it with Tears; shew the like Mercy to me, though unworthy of all Favours: Open my Eyes, that I may have a true Sense of my Iniquities, and let the Horror of my Sins oblige me to lament them daily in thy Sight. O God, what other Misfortune have I to bewail like that of having forgotten thee, my Lord, and lived so long an Enemy to thee.

O Jesus,

O Jesus, who in the prodigal Son, in the lost Sheep, in *Zaccheus*, in the poor Publican, in the Thief on the Cross, hast convinced us of the Mercy that waits for such as repent: Grant, I beseech thee, that as by my Iniquities I have taken Part with these Sinners, in forsaking thee, so my Repentance may be such, that with them I may find Mercy, and be again united to thee.

O Jesus, who by thy holy Baptist didst summon all Sinners to repent of their Iniquities, to lay the Ax to the Root, and bring forth Fruit becoming Repentance; mercifully grant to me, an unhappy Sinner, that I may obey this Summons.

Grant I may no longer delay my Repentance, since the Loss of one Moment may be the Hazard of all. I know the Mercy of God is infinite in itself; but in Regard of Sinners it has its Bounds, and they cannot always abuse it: It can be only in this Life; and this Life is in thy Hands, O God! And it may be, thy Arm is already lifted up, in order to cut down this unprofitable Tree. Suffer me therefore no more to delay what is my Duty at present, upon the Uncertainty of what is to come; since that Time may never come to me; and if it does, I may be then, thro' thy just Judgement, still more inclined to Delay.

Grant, likewise, that in my Repentance I may be solicitous to bring forth Fruit worthy of it. Now for this, I am sensible that my penitential Fruit ought to have some Proportion to the Grievousness and Number of my Sins; to the Strength of those ill Habits which Custom has confirmed in me; to the Anger and Judgement of God, which are due to my Sins; and to that particular Grace, by which I am drawn out of Sin, whilst so many others unhappily perish in it. To all these the Fruit of my Repentance ought to have regard, to be such as thou requirest. Help me, therefore, O Jesus, and permit me not carelessly to pass over this Business of Eternity, which cannot be well done, but with the greatest Care. Grant I may be truly serious in it, and that in the Fruit of my Repentance I may shew how great an Abhorrence I have of Sin, how

fearful I am of falling into it again, and of the terrible Judgements, the Punishment of that unhappy State.

O Jesus, who in the People enquiring of thy holy Baptist, what they were to do for the Amendment of their Lives, hast shewed us the Method of true Repentance; graciously vouchsafe me thy holy Grace, that I may follow this Method; that I may not only in general resolve to amend; but that I may both enquire and consider in particular what I am to do for accomplishing what I propose; I confess, O God, I know the Vanity of general Purposes, and that they are subject to great Deceit. Teach me therefore, I beseech thee, a better Way, and, with these first Penitents, let me always consider the Work I have to do, and how I am to do it. For since nothing is to be effected, but by using proper Means, if I omit this Consideration, I may easily guess all my Pretence to Repentance to be nothing but counterfeit.

O Jesus, by whose particular Grace *Zaccheus* offered the Half of his Goods to the Poor, and to make Satisfaction fourfold, if he had been unjust to any, and by these Means, of a public Sinner became a Child of God: Mercifully grant, that at all Times I may give Proof of my Conversion by a Change of my Life, and that, like *Zaccheus*, my Repentance may be always accompanied with a Solitude of being just both to God and Man. Give me Grace to make Satisfaction to every Neighbour, for all the Injuries I have done them, whether in Goods or in good Name; and so that I may rather exceed, than come short of what is due. For, in case of such Wrong, I am very sensible, Repentance cannot be sincere, if it be not solicitous thus to make Restitution. Give me Grace likewise to consider my Injustice against God, and to give Proof of my acknowledged Guilt, by obliging the Offender to make such Kind of Satisfaction as I am able, by giving Alms to the Poor, in such a Manner, as may bear some Proportion to the Weight of my Sins, and to the Substance of what, thro' thy Mercy, I possess. If I comply with these two Conditions, I hope it will be the Effect of a sincere Conversion, and that, with *Zaccheus*, I shall receive thee, O Jesus, into my House.

O blessed

O blessed Jesus, to whom all my Weakness is known, graciously vouchsafe to hear the Petition I now make thee; pardon me, I beseech thee, for as many Times as, in my Life past, I have abused thy Mercy, in pretending to repent; without complying with the Conditions of a true Repentance. Great has been my Neglect in this Point, and I cannot but be very apprehensive of thy Displeasure, which I thus provoked against me. But, O Jesus, great is thy Mercy to poor Sinners, who, confessing their Iniquities, take Shelter in thee. Have Regard, therefore, to me, and let thy sacred Blood plead for me, for the Forgiveness of all the several Neglects, though unknown to me, by which I have unworthily abused thy Goodness. And now obtain for me that Grace, that, for the Time to come, as often as I shall seek to thee for Mercy, I may do it so truly from the Heart, with that sincere Repentance, with such Endeavours for overcoming all the Evils of my Soul, and with such a penitential Spirit, that I may turn away thy Anger from me, and obtain the Mercy I seek.

C O N S T A N C Y.

AT this Time, O God, I come into thy Presence to lay before thee, with Sorrow, a great Weakness, to which I am unhappily subject, and to make my Address to thy infinite Goodness, to have Compassion on me, though unworthy, and to help me.

I confess, O God, through the Effect of thy Grace, I have a Sense of my Duty of loving thee, of serving thee, and of keeping thy Commandments. I see likewise, how much I not only come short of, but even offend against this my manifold Duty: And I know, how very provoking this is to thee, and how injurious to my eternal Interest. Upon which Considerations, being touched in Conscience, I many Times propose to reform, and begin a new Life; I see the Necessity of it, and therefore undertake it with great Designs and Resolutions, so as sometimes to conclude, that nothing of this World shall persuade me to forsake the Way in which I have resolved to walk.

But such, O God, is my Weakness, I soon fall from my good Purposes; Sloth or Corruption prevail upon me; and, without Reflection, I find myself in the midst of my usual Infirmities. Thus, O God, it is too often with me; so that whatever I propose, it soon vanishes like Smoke, and comes to nothing; and all the Effect of it is to leave me in Confusion, and give me a still clearer Conviction, of how poor, helpless and wretched a Creature I am.

This, O God, is my Weakness, and I must own it a great Unhappiness, in putting a Stop to all that is for my spiritual Good, and still keeping me at a Distance from thee. This is the Occasion that my Prayers are so often neglected, interrupted, and disturbed; that my Passions are ungoverned; that the Love of the World prevails in me; that Pride is so commanding; that my Tongue takes so much sinful Liberty; and that I go on in many Customs and Practices which, I plainly see, if not reformed, must hazard my Eternity: For altho' I lie under the Conviction of these and many other my Infirmities, I am very apprehensive of their dreadful Consequences, and hence resolve upon a Change; yet all this comes to nothing, because of my great Inconstancy in not pursuing my good Purposes; but still letting Corruption creep upon me, to the great Disappointment of whatever I have proposed of Good.

Wherefore now, I beseech thee, O God, to remedy this my Weakness. Shew thy Mercy to me, and deliver me from this great Inconstancy of Mind, whereby all my best Undertakings are rendered fruitless. Grant me a true Steadiness of Spirit, whereby I may be true to what I propose of Good, and faithful in whatever Covenant I make with thee. Suffer me no more to forget or neglect what I undertake, in Obedience to thy Law; nor so easily (to my Shame) to be carried out of the Way of Heaven, by every inviting Folly that occurs; nor to flatter my natural Corruption, which I know is my Enemy, and leads me to Sin. Establish my Heart, I beseech thee, against all its usual Weakness, and so powerfully confirm me by thy Grace, that, like a faithful Servant, I may chearfully undertake

undertake and with Resolution perform whatever is my Duty, to the Glory of thy holy Name, and my own everlasting Good.

In the first Place, I implore thy Help; O merciful God, against all Relapses into any wilful and known Sin. I know my Danger, and that I have no Security amidst the many Temptations of Life, except my Heart be confirmed by thy Grace, and by this divine Strength be enabled to make an obstinate Resistance against it. Of myself, O God, thou knowest I can do nothing; wherefore, I beseech thee, to have Regard to my Infirmitiy, and permit me no more, as formerly, to forsake my Cause, and treacherously to take Part with my Enemy. O God, how often have I done this, to my Confusion! But I most humbly implore thy Mercy, that it be so no more. Put a Stop to this my Misery; and infuse now into my Soul that true Spirit of the Gospel, that I may, from my Heart, hate all that is sinful, fly from it, as from my greatest Enemy, and rather choose Death, than knowingly to offend thee.

Give me Leave, O God, here to lay before thee thy own Mercies. How many poor weak Creatures, made of the same infirm Clay, as myself, hast thou, by thy Grace, so raised above their Nature, that they have chearfully despised both the Flatteries and Threats of the World, and embraced all the Torments of Death, rather than do what was displeasing to thee? Nay, how many, once great Sinners, hast thou so established in Grace, that they have renounced all their former Iniquities, and spent the rest of their Days in a most remarkable Sanctity? These have been some of thy Mercies, O God. And why then do I stand still so long, often purposing, and yet advancing nothing; as if my Work were more than could be done?

Lord, thou hast shewed it may be done; and, in so many Instances, hast manifested what thy Power and Goodness is, in helping weak Creatures to overcome Nature and stand against Sin. Help me, therefore, I beseech thee, and now suffer me no longer to waste my Life in fruitless Purposes and barren Thoughts; but give me Grace to follow the Steps of those thy chosen Servants, who have generously pursued the Course of

thy Commandments, and would not let the Devil, the World, or their own Corruption, put them out of their Way. Let this Power of thy Grace be seen in me also, O Lord. It was thy Grace which wrought such a Change in them: And hast not thou promised the same to such as earnestly desire it, and, with Humility, seek it?

O God, behold I confess my Unhappiness before thee; I am truly concerned at my own irresolute and changeable Temper; I am ashamed of my mock Repentance, in so frequently undertaking to amend, and yet still being the same; and I here manifest to thee, my God, my most earnest Desires of being freed from this Inconstancy; wishing with all my Heart, that my Soul were confirmed with thy Grace, so as never more to experience its usual Infirmitie, but abide steady in its Duty, and faithful in its Service to thee. To thee, O God, I appeal for the Sincerity of what I here profess, and therefore most humbly beseech thee to grant my Petition, that I may no longer go round in that unhappy Circle of *Sin and repent, repent and sin*; but that I may forsake all my wonted Sins with such a solemn Renunciation, as may stand good for Eternity. There is enough of my past Follies; let it now be the Effect of thy Grace, O God, in me, that there be no more.

Another Petition I make to thee, O God, for the Remedy of some other Weaknesses, of which I often propose the Cure, but never mend. I find myself subject to several Passions, which, tho' not criminal, are yet the Occasion of my frequent offending, and departing from the Rule of the Gospel. These are known to thee, O God, and I cannot pretend to be ignorant of them, because I so often see myself drawn out of the Way by them. The principal of these give me Occasion of frequent Trouble, because I see myself so weak; and tho' I often resolve to master them, upon the next Occasion, I am still surprized into them again. And so my whole Life runs away in resolving, without doing.

Thus, I confess, it is with me, and thus I will go on to the End of my Life, if thou, O God, dost not mercifully

cifully come into my Assistance, and strengthen this wretched Clay. For what can I do, who, tho' so often proud of myself, am no better than Misery and Nothing? What can I do, if thou dost not help me? Hear then my Prayer, O gracious God, and with thy Grace come to the Relief of this poor helpless Sinner. Suffer me no longer, thus unworthy, to yield to my own corrupt Passions, when, knowing them to be displeasing to thee, I have so often bewailed them, as my Unhappiness, and, in solemn Covenants with thee, engaged to stand against them. Help me now to overcome them; stretch forth thy Arm, and fight for me; give me new Strength, and let my Enemies be put to Flight; and may I never more become a Prey to them, nor be unadvisedly drawn into their Snares.

This same I ask of thee, O God, as to all my other Failings of Sloth, Love of Ease, and of infinite Neglects, to which I am daily subject; and likewise, as to many Dangers, to which I indiscreetly expose myself, and ill Customs, in which, to the Reproach of my own Conscience, I still go on. In all these I stand in need of thy Mercy, O God; because, tho' I am conscious of the great Disorder these cause in my Soul, and of many Sins into which I am led by them; yet nothing of this prevails with me so far, as to disengage myself from them; so that while I daily complain of my Misfortunes, and seem to lament my Weakness, I am still the same, and my Endeavours are so weak, as to effect nothing. Wherefore, O God, I beseech thee, have Compassion on this thy poor Servant, and permit me not any longer to go on thus doing and undoing, as if I were in Jeft with Eternity, and with those great Duties which I owe thee. To what Purpose can it be, to confess my Sins before thee, to sigh and express the Sense of my Unhappiness in Tears, if I still return to my Weaknesses again, as if they had never been any Trouble to me? Help me therefore, O merciful God, and deliver me from this Abuse. Let thy Grace confirm me with greater Constancy, that I may no more go on thus changeable and uncertain; but that, being strengthened and made steady from above, I

may with such Resolution make Resistance against all that is evil, as never to desist, till my Enemies are overcome.

Thus, O God, I send forth my Desires, and ask Help of thee, in a Case, that truly wants it. But how can I reasonably expect thy Help, if I, thro' a certain Laziness of Mind, and Want of Resolution, lie still, and will not take the Pains, necessary for effecting what I desire? When I look upon myself and consider my own Ways, I find that, after my best Purposes, I presently forget what I propose, and cannot discover that I am either solicitous, or diligent, or watchful, as the Circumstances of the Thing require; but presently go on bold and careless, as if I were subject to no Weakness, or had no Danger to fear. Now I easily see, that to grieve at repeated Failings, to resolve upon Amendment, pray for Help to amend; and after all, to take no more Care and Pains, in order to amend, looks no better than dissembling or shuffling; it looks as if I did not believe the Business to be very great, and is an evident Proof, that either my Faith of Eternity is not found, or that I act very much against Reason and Faith, in being so very careless in an Affair, in which I believe myself so very much concerned.

It shews to me again, that I do not fear thee, my God, as I ought, and that I do not truly love thee; it being certain, that if I had either a real Love to do thy holy Will, or a Fear to offend thee, so as the Almighty ought to be feared, I should be more solicitous and watchful in overcoming and avoiding all that, which could probably bring me into thy Displeasure; I should make this the great Business of my Life, and should not value how other Things succeeded, so this one went well. I easily observe, how the Love and Fear of created Things work in me; with what Solicitude, Watchfulness, and Industry, they are attended: And is it not too evident, even to my Confusion, that I do not love thee, or fear thee, who am so little concerned, and take so very little Pains, either in doing what pleases thee, or in avoiding what I know is displeasing to thee? And how then can I reasonably expect thy Assistance, O God, who lie daily under the

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Fruit of so many great Neglects, and am so considerably wanting in what I ought to do?

But the more I see my own Wants and Neglects, the greater Necessity I have of imploring the Assistance of thy divine Grace. Help me, therefore, I beseech thee, according to my Necessities. Thou knowest the Root of all my Neglects, and likewise the Remedy proper for my Cure: Be therefore a Physician to me, and heal me. I have Reason to fear, that my Faith is but imperfect and weak: Encrease in me, I beseech thee, the Life of Faith; make this vigorous and active, that the Impressions of it being strong, I may be carried on powerfully by them, and pursue all the Works of Eternity with Earnestness and Perseverance, answerable to the Importance of the Concern. Raise my Faith to such a Degree, that lessening the Care of this World, and of all that belongs to it, the great Solicitude of my Soul may be confined to the Busines of Salvation, and my principal Watchfulness be employed in seeing, that this be done well.

O God, if my Faith were what it ought to be, how careful should I be in all the Affairs of my Soul? How would these take up my Thought and Memory, and put me upon all Manner of Contrivance and Labour, for effecting whatever appears necessary for my eternal Good? How would the Follies of this World be passed by with Contempt; the Concern of earthly Busines be lessened; the Inclinations of corrupt Nature be despised or trampled under Foot; and the Exercises of Prayer, and of all Manner of Self-denial, be embraced with Chearfulness, as the proper Means for coming to the Possession of thee, the only desirable Good! Is it not plain then, while my Soul is so very much indisposed, and I am subject to so many continual Neglects in all that is spiritual, that I want Faith, and that the Want of this is the Root of all my Unsettledness, of my little Resolution and Inconstancy? Help me therefore, O God, and increase my Faith.

Let my Soul likewise be possessed with the true Love of thee, and with a Fear of thy Displeasure; for I evidently see, that the Want of these is one

great Occasion of all my Neglects; and I in vain complain of being false to my good Purposes, if this Foundation of all Christian Resolution and Courage be not laid in my Heart: There being no Possibility of labouring and persevering in thy Service, for those, who do not in earnest fear thee, and sincerely love thee. Shew this Mercy therefore to thy Servant, as to possess my Heart with this Fear and this Love; that hence my Soul may be changed; having a Horror of all that Sloth or Self-love suggests, as being unworthy of one that has undertaken to serve God; and with an untired Eagerness pursuing all that belongs to Salvation, as being the Work of God, and the only Means of coming to be united with him for all Eternity.

This Petition I make to thee, O God, as to all that can be necessary for overcoming Sin, and all the Dangers of it: But as to such Weaknesses or Failings, which are almost inseparable from this our State of Infirmity, I beg likewise, that I may have a Dislike of them, that I may not favour or yield to them; that, being grieved to see myself so imperfect, I may both in Sighs, Prayers, and constant Endeavours, daily strive against them; but, O God, as far as any of these may be necessary for my Humiliation and Exercise; as far as these are the inseparable Attendants of our corrupt Nature, and the Punishment of Sin, I most earnestly beseech thee to grant me Patience under them, that I may submit to the Trouble of them, as to an Uneasiness, which is the Condition of this State, and a Penalty, which thy Justice has laid upon me; so that I may be always patient under their Contradiction, while with my best Endeavours I am solicitous to have no other Part but only to fight against them. Grant me this Patience, O God, that I may not indiscreetly disquiet myself with what is unavoidable, and, by such Disquiets, be the great Hindrance of my own spiritual Good. Teach me rather to be wise, that I may submit to what cannot be avoided, and learn the Christian Art of drawing Good out of Evil, and of improving under the Exercise.

O God,

O God, who in *Pbaraoth* hast shewed us the sad Effects of Inconstancy, and the Punishments of it; mercifully grant, that I may be faithful in the Performance of whatever Covenants I make with thee; and that, being always solicitous in this Affair, I may neither forget nor neglect what I undertake; but, by a due Watchfulness over all my Ways, may prevent the Return of those Evils, which I have engaged to amend.

O God, who in *Saul* hast shewed us what human Weakness is, who several Times promising no more to pursue innocent *David*, yet still pursued him again: Shew this Mercy to me, thy unworthy Servant, that I may not fall under this Weakness; that I may not be thus changeable and inconstant; that I may not return to what I have promised to forsake; but that, with Christian Fidelity and Resolution, I may be true to whatever I undertake in Obedience to thy holy Will.

O God, who didst so often forgive thy People of *Israell*, seeking to thee for the Pardon of their Sins, and, for their repeated Transgressions, didst at length forsake them; I beseech thee, thro' thy infinite Mercies, to deliver me from this Perverseness; that I may be ever watchful against all those Sins, which thro' thy Goodness have been once forgiven me. May the Dread of thy Judgements here awaken my Care, since I see there is no greater Provocation, than to be thus ungrateful under thy Mercies, and to abuse thy Goodness.

O God, who hast declared by thy Prophet, that, if the just Man shall turn from his Righteousness, all the Good he has done shall not be remembered, and that he shall die in his Sin: Season my Heart, I beseech thee, with a wholesome Fear of thy Justice, that I may be careful against all Relapses into Sin; for if the just Man departing from thee shall feel the Severity of Anger, what must my Unhappiness be, an unworthy Sinner as I am, if, having recovered thy Grace, I become forgetful of thy Mercy, and return again to my Iniquities? Let thy Goodness, O God, prevent this Misery.

O God, who, in thy Servant *David*, hast given us an Example of Constancy and Perseverance in the Purposes of

of a true Repentance, so as to bewail his Sin, and water his Couch with Tears, to humble himself in Fasting and Sackcloth, to pour forth his Soul seven Times a Day in Prayer, and to meditate on thy Law Day and Night: Grant, O God, that having obtained thy Mercy, in the Forgiveness of my Sins, I may be watchful against all my wonted Weakness, and, by the Method of this thy Servant, labour to prevent the Dangers of it. Oh, that my Heart were possessed with a sincere Repentance! How then should I have a Horror of Sin, and be ready to embrace all those difficult-Ways which have been a Help to thy Servants, for being faithful to the Obligations of a true Repentance!

O blessed Jesus, who in the evil Spirit returning into the Man (from whence he had been cast out) with seven other evil Spirits worse than himself, hast shewed that it is no Advantage for a Sinner to partake of the Mercies of God, in the Forgiveness of his Sin, except by just Diligence he labours to prevent the Return of his Iniquity; and that if, falling in this; he again opens his Heart to Sin, the latter End of that Man will be worse than the Beginning: Obtain for me, I beseech thee, the Grace of Perseverance, that, being called to Repentance, I may make a good Use of that Mercy; and, being always apprehensive of thy Judgements, may, by an untired Watchfulness, cut off all Hopes from the evil Spirit, once cast out, of ever returning again. Help me, O Jesus, in this Point, for great is my Infirmitie; and this Encrease of Unhappiness must be my Fate, if thy Grace does not finish what thy Grace has begun.

O Jesus, who, having healed the Man of a long Infirmitie of eight and thirty Years, didst give him this Charge: *Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse Thing come to thee:* Grant this Mercy to thy Servant, that I may have a just Apprehension of relapsing into Sin, and of the severer Judgements which are the Punishment of it. It is thou, O God, who knowest the ill Consequences of this Neglect, hast charged me to have a Care: Grant, that the Mercy of this Admonition may ever keep me watchful against all the Dangers of Sin, and that I may never be so foolishly desperate

perate as to venture there, where thou hast forewarned me of such Judgements.

O Jesus, who by thy Apostles hast repeated to us this Lesson, That it is better for Christians not to have known the Way of Justice, than, after the Knowledge, to turn back from the holy Commandment delivered to them: Vouchsafe, I beseech thee, to imprint this Lesson in my Mind, that I may be solicitous, not only to recover from the State of Sin, but likewise to retain whatever Grace thou shalt bestow upon me. Stand by me therefore and communicate to me such Resolution and Strength of Mind, as are absolutely necessary for so weak a Creature as I am, every Day exposed to Temptations, and encompassed with Dangers on every Side. Deliver me from Sloth and Carelessness, make me ever fearful of Dangers, and distrustful of myself; keep my Mind watchful against all InfirmitieS, but especially those which have brought me into thy Displeasure. Let this, O Jesus, be the Method of my Life, and then, I hope, by thy Grace, never to turn back from the Way of Justice in which thy Mercy shall place me.

O Jesus, who by thy Apostle hast informed us, how much thy Servants have suffered, rather than be wanting in their Fidelity to thee; that many have had the Trial of cruel Mockings, of Scourgings, of Imprisonment and Bonds; that many have been stoned, fawn asunder, or slain with the Sword; that many have wandered about in sheep and goat Skins; in Desarts and Mountains, in Dens and Caves of the Earth, being destitute, afflicted and tormented; and all this, that they might be faithful in their Duty, and not be false to the Covenant they had made with thee: I beseech thee, O blessed Redeemer, that, being engaged in the same Service with these, I may partake of the same Grace; that I may not so easily forget my Duty, or be persuaded to act against it; but being resolute and constant to what I profess, may rather choose to suffer all Difficulties, than be faithless to thee. Oh! how will the Constancy of these thy Servants, under all Extremities, be my Condemnation; who am tired and discouraged in ordinary Conflicts, and often forsake thy Cause, when

I have

I have nothing to suffer for it ? Ah, treacherous Sinner ; how wilt thou answer it who art so little solicitous for being faithful, where it is thy Duty, as others have done, to lay down thy Life ? How little hast thou done in this Affair ? Nay, how little concerned art thou to do any thing ? O Jesus, give me a better Spirit, that I may take Pains to be faithful, and, like my holy Predecessors, esteem my Duty of greater Concern than my Life.

O Jesus, who, by the same Apostle hast again confirmed this Lesson, in requiring us, *Not to be wearied and faint in our Minds ; forasmuch as we have not yet resisted unto Blood, striving against Sin* ; and in these Words hast told us, that it is our Duty to strive against Sin, even unto Blood : Grant, I may have always in mind a lively Sense of this Obligation, that I may never be wearied in a Cause, which cannot cost too dear. How miserable I am at present, who, instead of striving against Sin, too often go forth to meet it, and open my Heart to receive it ! How miserable, who cannot persuade myself there to take Pains where I ought to labour and fight, even unto Blood ! O Jesus, change my Heart, that I may be true to my Profession ; that, knowing it my Duty to resist Sin, I may with Perseverance resist it, and be resolute in venturing all for establishing thy Kingdom in my Soul.

T E M P T A T I O N S .

I Confess, O God, my Weakness to be very great ; and thou knowest how many, how violent, how endless are the Temptations of this Life ; and that it is impossible for such Weakness as mine to subsist amidst such Dangers, if it be not supported by thy heavenly Grace. Behold, therefore, convinced of my Necessity, I come at this Time before thee, to implore thy fatherly Assistance upon thy infirm Creature, who must certainly perish if thou hast not Compassion on me. Look, therefore, I beseech thee, upon me thy poor Servant, and strengthen me by thy divine Grace, that I may not be left to myself, amidst the great Difficulties of my Life, but under all Trials,

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may be faithful to thee, my God, and not do any Thing that is displeasing to thee.

Stretch for thy Hand and help me; for what can I do, who am so poor and helpless, if thy heavenly Light does not discover to me the Dangers of this unhappy Life, and thy Grace enable me to overcome them? I know I deserve not what I ask, who have so often sinned against thee: But, O God, it being the Horror of my Sins that now terrifies me, and the long Experience of my repeated Weakness that now fills me with Fears; I hope thou wilt have Compassion on me, who, having often offended thee, am now displeased at my past Offences, and most earnestly desire to sin no more.

For this End I now beg thy Assistance; and, in the first Place, I beseech thee to give me a true Knowledge of myself, that I may be sensible of all the Infirmities and Passions to which I am subject, and which often lead me into Sin. Suffer me no more to dissemble or flatter them, as if they were innocent; nor to pass them by without Concern, as if there were no Danger in them. No, my God, this I know to be a great Unhappiness, and even one of the heaviest of thy Judgements, to leave Christians under this Blindness, as to live on without knowing their Enemies, and without any Apprehension of the many Snares which are before them.

Give me a Sense likewise of all other Dangers, especially of those infinite Snares which the World lays before me, in whatever Way it is prepared to deceive; as likewise of such as the Devil's Malice contrives, who, having found my Weakness, knows how to lay and work out his Designs. Of all these, I beseech thee, O God, to give me a true Light, that by discerning the Mischief of whatever is proposed, I may be better provided against it, and so govern my Steps, as not to be made a Prey to the Enemy.

For my greater Security, I beg of thee, O Father of Mercies, the Spirit of Wisdom, not the Wisdom of this World, which perishes, but that better Wisdom which leads to Eternity; that, by the Help of this, may be prevented in me all farther Effects of Rashness
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and Indiscretion. O God, what Reason have I to be confounded at the many Sins into which I have been unhappily surprized, for want of due Care and more Consideration ! I heartily desire there may be no Addition to what, through my Misfortune, has already been ; and therefore make this earnest Petition to thee, that I may be more circumspect for the Time to come ; that I be no more bold in the Dangers of Sin ; that I be not over-credulous, too light, easy, and inconfide-
rate, but that I may always deliberate, and, by pru-
dent Foresight, escape all those Snares, by which either the World or the Devil prepares to draw me into Sin.

But, O God, let it not be thy only Mercy to give me a Foresight of Dangers, but grant me this one Pe-
tition more, that I may have Strength to stand against them. This must be thy Gift, O God, for in myself I have no Help. Take me therefore, I beseech thee, into thy Protection, and let not thy poor Creature perish, who, confessing my extreme Poverty, fly to thee for Shelter, against the infinite Dangers which threaten me. Shew thyself to be my God in espousing my Cause, and undertaking my Defence ; stand by me, when Danger approaches, and let not the Enemy pre-
vail against me.

Thou hast given me sufficient Proof of thy Goodness and Power ; and, when I consider the wonderful Things thou hast wrought in such Vessels of Weakness as I am, I have an Assurance of being secure, if thou shewest this Mercy to thy Servant, as to enable me by thy Grace, and appear in my Cause. And hast not thou promised this to such as call upon thee in the Day of Tribulation, and put their Trust in thee ? Remem-
ber, O God, this thy Promise ; for behold now a poor Creature is prostrate before thee, who most solemnly owns that he [or she] has no Help but in thee, and despairing of himself [or herself] has no Confidence but in thy Grace.

Have Regard therefore to my universal Weakness, and, according to my manifold Necessities, pour forth thy Grace into my Soul. Confirm my Heart against all Invitations to Sin, and when, through its natural Corruption,

Corruption, it is in Danger of being drawn into Evil, then come in to my Assistance, O God, and mercifully deliver me. Teach me to despise all that pleases for a Moment, and torments for ever. Establish me against all frothy Charms, and suffer me no more to be deluded with what is vain and foolish, nor to catch at that which flatters that it may ruin. O God, how do I see my Misery, while I ask for Help? Help me therefore, I beseech thee, in the evil Day, and be my Deliverer when Danger is before me.

I do not, however, ask the Privilege of being exempt from all Temptations or Trials, for I know that is not to be in this mortal State: I know thou art pleased to exercise thy best Servants with many Trials, that, being found faithful, it may be to the Increase of their Crown; I know they are necessary for to balance our Pride, and that, being thus convinced of our Weakness, we may be kept humble, and in a due Dependance on thee. I ask therefore nothing in this Point, but leave this whole Matter to the Order of thy Providence. But what I earnestly beg is, that thou wilt consider my great Weakness, and assist me with thy heavenly Grace, in Proportion to the Trials thou shalt appoint for me, that I may be faithful under them, and make the Advantage of them which thy Goodness has designed for me.

But this must be the Effect of thy Grace, O God; for thou seest what my Infirmity is, who have neither Patience to bear with Difficulties as I ought, nor Courage to stand my Ground in ordinary Assaults; so that, whatever Trials come to my Share, I must certainly be a Loser by them, if thy Goodness does not mercifully support me. Give me, therefore, inward Strength of Mind, according to the Difficulty of the Conflicts into which thou shalt please to call me; and, by thy heavenly Light, direct me how to make the right Use of them.

I know there are none undertake to be thy Servants, but they must expect to be tempted, and be prepared for Trials. It is thus Virtue is perfected, and, by many Victories, is made a Way to great Triumphs. If by this Way thou hast carried thy best Servants,
give

give me Grace, likewise, I beseech thee, to submit to the Trouble of it, and let me not be tired or impatient under the Exercise. It is an uneasy Thing to be thus always subject to Contradictions, to feel the Struggle of a rebellious Nature, and to have the Mind perplexed with what it most abhors: But such being the Condition of our unhappy State, I submit to the Trouble of it as to the just Punishment of Sin, and only implore thy Assistance, that I may neither open my Heart to the sinful Part, nor be dejected at this repeated Experience of my Weakness.

I most earnestly again petition for thy Grace, against all the Designs which the Devil has against me. Thou thyself hast told me, that he goes about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour; and I know his Malice is particular against those who have by Violence forced themselves out of his Slavery, and take Pains to be faithful in serving thee. And what can I, a poor weak Creature, do to be secure against his Assauls, who knows all my Infirmities, and has so many Ways to deceive? Wherefore, I beseech thee, O God, to stand by me, and by thy Grace protect me in Time of Danger. My Help is in thee, and if thou mercifully takest me into thy Care, I need not fear what all the infernal Powers can do against me; but then without thee, O God, thou seest I perish.

Confirm therefore my Heart, and make it steady in thy Service, that I may not hearken to the Suggestions of the Enemy, nor be moved with his Delusions. Nature is weak and inclines to all that is sinful; but this Weakness and Inclination is no Sin, if the Heart keeps the Command of itself, and if the Will yields not to what is evil. Let my Heart and Will therefore be under thy Protection, O God, that whatever Temptations arise, these may abide constant and faithful to thee and to thy Commands. Dwell thou in my Heart and command my Will, and, under this Discipline, teach them to resist or despise all that is evil. Under this Method I may walk on securely, since all that the Devil can do is nothing, if the Will stand its Ground, and be not false to thee. He can fawn and

and bark, but can bite none but those who are willing.

Upon this Ground I beseech thee, O God, to confirm my Soul against all Dejection, Anxiety, and indiscreet Terrors, so that I may even then enjoy a certain Peace of Mind when the Devil, by his Suggestions, is endeavouring to throw me into Disquiet. I am sensible how great an Interest he has in perplexing my Mind with Fears ; since by these a Stop is put to all my best Designs ; I become like a heartless, discouraged Person, and am rendered almost incapable either of resisting Evil or doing Good. Wherefore I earnestly desire thy assisting Grace, that, being ever watchful against all evil Thoughts, I may be likewise careful to prevent all Manner of Disturbance, and not give the Devil any Advantage by my Indiscretion. This must be thy Gift, O God, since my Mind is so easily perplexed, that, if thou dost not command a Calm, I can expect nothing but a Succession of Storms.

But above all, I most earnestly implore thy Protection, O God, against myself, because from hence is my greatest Danger, and neither the World nor Devil is so much the Cause of Temptations to me, as I am to myself. Wherefore, I beseech thee, most gracious Lord, to have Pity on thy Servant, and to secure me so by thy Grace, that I may no more be the Author of my own Mischief. For this End I beseech thee, O God, that by thy Help my Heart may be under better Government, so as to command all its Affections and Passions ; that it may no more be fond of what is dangerous or unprofitable, nor admire those Things which are deceitful, and have nothing substantial in them. Into how many Sins have I run, drawn by my own ungoverned Desires ? But now by thy Grace, O God, may all these be moderated ; for then will the Temptations be lessened, which are occasioned by them.

Command likewise, I beseech thee, all my sinful Inclinations, and bring them into Subjection to thy Law. These often give me Disturbance, and lead many Times with Violence to what is criminal, seeking such Things as flatter them, and thus surprizing me

me in Sin. And how many, O God, are these Inclinations, and how deceitful ! So that wholly to root them out is impossible ; and the best Endeavours for subduing some, are generally attended with the ill Success of making way for others. This is an Unhappiness which obliges me to seek Help from thee : For while I have so strong a Bias to what is evil, and bend with that Weight to Sin, as if my great Business was to seek my own Destruction ; how can I be secure, if thou, O God, dost not shew Mercy to me ? Help me therefore, I beseech thee, and in this manifest thy Goodness to me, in giving me Grace to moderate all my Inclinations, and that I may no more follow, or even hearken to those which lead to Sin.

Such another Petition I make to thee, O God, that I may govern all my Senses. These are a great Mercy, and I know how miserable I should be, if any one of them were taken from me. Whence, I own, I have Reason to be thankful for what I enjoy, and to be careful in the right Use of them for the Service of my temporal and spiritual Life. And yet how unhappy am I, who, forgetful of this thy Mercy, abuse thy Blessings, and so often make my Senses the Instruments of Sin, in the Service of those Inclinations and Desires, which, by thy Law, I am commanded to resist ; and every Day, by the undue Liberty I give them, create to myself many Temptations which weaken, if not quite overthrow all that is good within me ?

Here then, O God, I most humbly beseech thee, to be my Helper, for the better Government of all my Senses ; that I may no more abuse them to thy Displeasure, and to the Increase of such Temptations which are as so much Poison to my Soul. Teach me to govern my Eyes and Ears, that, being open to all that is profitable, they may be ever shut against Vanity and Sin. How many Times has Death entered in by these, and made my Soul a Prey to the Enemy ? But it is enough, O God, it is enough ; let me thus no more become my own Murderer. Put a Guard likewise upon my Lips, that my Tongue be no more employed in preparing Snares for my Soul ; that I offend

offend not in Words, nor in gratifying my Appetite to any Excess. Let my Hands and Steps be under the same Restraint, that these be no more serviceable to Sin, nor, like unnatural Parts, contribute to the eternal Ruin of the whole. Thus, O God, may all my outward Man be under the Discipline of thy Law, that I may with Truth say, it is thy holy Will, and not Corruption, that rules in me.

Having thus begun, permit me, O Lord, who am but Dust and Ashes, to make my Necessities known, and still to ask for Relief. Thou knowest, O God, into how many Temptations I am led by Sloth and Idleness. First, being alone, if a slothful Humour be but indulged, how fruitful presently does it shew itself in an infinite Variety of vain and unprofitable Fancies; such as, beginning with what is only impertinent, soon lead to what is prophane, monstrous, and sinful, so as to attempt upon God himself, and the whole Table of his Commandments? In this, O God, I must confess my great Folly, in raising up against myself so many evil Spittis, who of myself am able to lay none.

Then, as to idle Conversation, and such Entertainments as are sought for gratifying an idle Humour; it is not possible to number the Snares I prepare for myself, and to what Degree I increase the Difficulties of my Salvation. Ah, my God! were it my Business to join with the Devil, and to contrive with him my more certain Damnation, I need take no other Counsel but of Sloth and Idleness, and walk by their Direction; for these will do the Work of seven Devils. And what a Confusion then ought it to be for me who pretend to be a Servant of God, and to save my Soul, to make Choice of such ill Advisers, and not only to be led by them, but even to be pleased, and think myself then most happy when I am following their Directions.

O God, I have here Reason to be confounded at my Madness, and to call upon thee for Help. Have Compassion therefore on me, as an unhappy Contriver of my own Ruin; and give me Grace, I beseech thee, to be wiser. Make me jealous of all Impertinency

nency of Thought and vain Amusements ? and since this Liberty leads me so often to the Brink of Sin, inspire me with a prudent Fear of it, that I may give a Check to its first Roving, and rather choose to finother Sin in its remoter Dispositions, than help to bring it on so far that I know not how to be disengaged from it, without evident Danger of becoming its Prey.

Deliver me likewise, O God, from that great Unhappiness of loving to be idle. I have seen the sad Effects of this, and now wish, with all my Heart, it may never any more be found in me. Hear therefore my Petition, I beseech thee, and take from me the Spirit of Sloth and Idleness, that I may be happily rescued from the infinite Dangers of it. Root out this Evil, and let all the Remnants of it be destroyed. Behold I lay open my Heart before thee, and, without any Reserve, put it into thy Hands, most earnestly imploring thy Almighty Power to change and mold it as thou wilt ; so that thou purify it from this Corruption, and give a true Horror of this Seed of Damnation.

But if thou art so pleased that Inclinations still remain in me, for my Trial, I submit to the Orders of thy Providence, thy holy Will be done ; but then, O Lord, strengthen me by thy holy Grace, that I may not yield, nor give myself up to be directed by them ; for if I take these for my Guide, I know I am in Danger of being eternally lost, and shall in vain ask of thee, *Not to lead me into Temptation*, while it will be my Choice to seek Temptations, and run into the midst of them. Since therefore thou hast been so merciful, O God, as to give me a true Sense of this Unhappiness, perfect now this Work in me, and by thy Grace enable me to overcome it, and let me no more there yield, where yielding is nothing less than putting myself into the Devil's Hands.

Wherefore, O God, I beseech thee to season my Heart with a true Fear of this Evil, that instead of thinking favourably, I may always be afraid of it. Give me a Dislike of all those Places, Entertainments, and Conversations, which Idleness seeks ; and however they

they may seem pleasing to others, let me have no other Idea of them but from the infinite Number of Families which are there ruined, and of Souls which are corrupted and perish there. Thus let me always esteem them as Porticoes to Hell, and the Devil's Butchery ; and hence be more fearful of them than of Death ; that so I may never hearken to Invitations, nor encourage such Proposals, any more than I would of playing with Poison, with Basilisks, or Dragons, or, which is the Truth, with infernal Spirits, designed on Purpose to make me their Prey.

Thus, O God, I desire it may be with me ; and though my Temper be such, as to be averse to what I here ask, yet behold, my God, without regarding Inclination, I, with all the Earnestness of my Soul, both repeat and press this my Petition, that I may have no Relish but real Horror of whatever is the Entertainment of Idleness. And since there needs no more for obtaining what I ask, but thy Will and thy Word ; speak, O Lord, the Word, and my Soul shall be changed ; command, Lord, and I shall become a new Creature, not seeking or admiring what is sinful or vain, but such profitable Exercises as may be for my eternal Good.

And, if so thou wilt, that I find Nature to be Nature still ; still craving for what pleases, and averse to what is truly good ; give me Grace to deny it ; and if it pines under the Discipline, if it complains of Rigour, if it pleads against Singularity, if it pretends Health, if the Danger of becoming stupid and melancholy be its Argument, let it pine, complain, and plead on, but let me still be more afraid of Idleness than of whatever Inconvenience it pretends, and chuse rather to bear the Uneasiness of Nature, than to endeavour its Relief with the Hazard of Eternity. This is my most earnest Petition to thee, to make me sincere in it, and that I may find the Effects of thy Mercy, in resolutely withstanding the next Occasions that offer, which are in favour of Idleness.

O God, who didst permit our first Parents to be tempted in Paradise, and, in their Fall, hast shewed us both our own Weakness, and the dismal Effects of giving

giving Ear to the Devil ; mercifully grant this our common Misfortune may be my daily Instruction ; and that what I every Day suffer from that first Attempt, which the Devil made, may give such a Dread of all his Proposals as to reject them with speed, and with a constant Resolution to stand against them.

O God, who in *Sampson*, *David*, and *Solomon*, hast given us so many Instances of human Weakness, and shewed us, that neither Strength, Piety, nor Wisdom, are any Security against Temptations ; grant, I beseech thee, that the Sense of my own Weakness may ever make me fearful of Danger, and watchful against all Temptations : For, when I see Persons of thy own Choice, and wonderfully privileged with heavenly Favours, thus miserably to fall ; what can I expect, so unworthy a Sinner, but to become a Prey to the Enemy, if I expose myself to Dangers, and to have my Presumption punished, by being forsaken by thee !

O God, who didst permit the Children of *Israel* so often to sink under the Trials which thou didst send them, and so often to offend, by yielding under Temptations ; have regard, I beseech thee, to thy Servant, and assist me with heavenly Strength, that I may have Patience and Courage under all the Trials of Life, and stand against all Temptations as against the Enemies of my Soul, and the Snares of Hell.

O God, by whose Grace *Abraham* was faithful to thee in the greatest of Trials, and *Moses* persevered amidst infinite Provocations : Help me, I beseech thee, with thy divine Grace, that whereas of myself I must certainly fall under the Difficulties of Life, I may be supported by thy Grace, and with Courage go thro' whatever Exercises thou shalt appoint for my Trial. It is hard what many Times happens ; but I know all may be done by thy Assistance ; and that, being nothing of myself, by thee I may be made strong.

O God, who didst support *Susanna* and *Judith* amidst great Temptations, and carry them spotless out of great Dangers ; let the same Grace, I beseech thee, O God, go along with me, and be the Support of my Weakness, that whatever Temptations occur, whether from the Malice of Men or Devils, or from my own

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Corruption, I may faithfully stand against them, with the Courage of these thy Servants, and never be so foolishly blind as, by such perishing Satisfactions, to be flattered out of Eternity.

O blessed Jesus, who, taking upon thee human Nature, wast subject so far to our Weakness, as to be assaulted by the Devil, and even with the most horrid of all Temptations; mercifully grant that, by thy Example, I may be encouraged; and that if thou shalt so permit, that the Devil disturb my Mind with prophanè, sinful, and wicked Thoughts, I may not be dejected at the Attempts of his Malice; but that if he should still repeat and press them, as he did to thee, I may be still comforted with the Remembrance of what thou sufferedst, and that it ought to be neither a Trouble nor Surprize to find an unworthy Member thus associated to his divine Head.

O Jesus, who didst reject all the Temptations of the Devil, and oblige him, in Despair, to retire from thee; vouchsafe, I beseech thee, so powerfully to assist me with thy Grace, that, by thy Example, I may never open my Heart to the Proposals of the Enemy; but with such Resolution stand against them, as to take from him all Hopes of Success, and force him to leave me in the Enjoyment of that Peace which I desire always to have in thee.

O Jesus, who hast taught us to pray, that we be not led into Temptations; and didst give this Advice to thy three Apostles in the Garden of Gethsemani; *arise and pray, lest ye enter into Temptation.* I beseech thee, O merciful Redeemer, not to forsake me amidst the Temptations of this Life, nor leave me to myself; but let thy Grace ever accompany me, that I may be watchful against all Dangers, and, by diligent Prayer, obtain so far the Favour of thy Assistance, that I may continue faithful to thee, and ever acknowledge thee to have been my Deliverer.

O Jesus, who in thy Apostles forsaking thee, and in *Peter* denying thee, hast convinced us of our Weakness, and of the little Confidence we ought to have in ourselves; teach me, I beseech thee, this Lesson, that I may never presume on my own Strength or Virtue,

which is only leaning on a broken Reed; but that my whole Confidence, in Time of Danger, may be in thee, my God. For if those thy chosen Servants, bred up under thy Discipline, and sanctified by particular Grace, discover so much Weakness, when left to themselves, what must be my unhappy Fate, O God, if I am not mindful of my whole Help being in thee, but should unfortunately trust to myself! Preserve me, I beseech thee, O Jesus, from this Blindness.

O Jesus, who by thy Apostle hast given us this Cau-
tion; *Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed, lest
be fall:* Vouchsafe to possess my Heart with this ne-
cessary Fear of myself; and that even then I may be
most apprehensive of my own Weakness, when I think
myself most secure and strong. I know the Fear and
Distrust of one's Self is the Foundation of Christian
Strength; and that Humility is the best Prevention of
Sin; according to this Method may I always proceed,
and upon this Foundation may I build my Security,
distrusting in myself, that I may have my whole Con-
fidence in thee.

O Jesus, who amidst the Privileges of wonderful Re-
velations, didst exercise thy Apostle with very sharp
Temptations; and, upon his earnest Petition, didst give
him this comfortable Assurance, that thy Grace was
sufficient for him: Give me Grace to submit with Pa-
tience, to whatever Exercise of this Kind thou shalt
appoint for my Humiliation; let me then, O God,
seek Help from thee; and let this be my Comfort,
that however weak I am, I have in thy Grace suffi-
cient Help for defeating all the Power of the Enemy.
Let me never be discouraged in being exercised with
St. Paul, as long as I have the same God to defend
me.

O Jesus, who didst so far support this thy Apostle,
that instead of being dejected, he gloried in his Infir-
mities, as being the Occasion of thy Power being ma-
nifested in him: Preserve me; I beseech thee, from all
Dejection of Spirits amidst these Buffets of Satan, and
teach me rather to glory in the Conviction of my Weak-
ness, as far as this proves the Occasion of shewing the
Power of thy Grace. Let me, a Sinner, be humbled
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as thou wilt, so thou, my God, be glorified; and let this be my Joy.

O Jesus, who, by thy Apostle, hast given us this Assurance, that thou wilt not suffer thy Servants to be tempted above their Strength, but that they shall make an Advantage by the Temptations, with which they are assaulted; mercifully fulfil this Promise in me, that I may ever find the Assistance of thy Grace, in Proportion to the Attempts made against me; that so I may be faithful in resisting, and turn the Violence offered into the Occasion of greater Triumph. This I can hope, if thou shalt enable me by thy Grace; for, what are the greatest Temptations to those who are in the Hand of God? But if thou leavest me to my own Weakness, then the lightest Temptations are Snares, and I shall certainly fall in them: For, what am I in my own Hand, but fit to be made a Prey?

Being obliged to confess this Truth, it is my hearty Desire that I may be ever mindful of it, and that the Memory of it may make me fearful of running into Danger; for I confess, O God, it must be nothing less than Madness in me to expose myself, who have nothing in myself to trust to: Wherefore, I beseech thee, O Jesus, to grant me this Wisdom, that, knowing myself to be helpless, I may never choose, nor be persuaded to go into such Circumstances, which require great Strength to stand secure: Rather may I be ever watchful against them, and hope for thy Mercy by being fearful of myself. And as for all other Temptations, which are not occasioned by my Fault, in all them I beg thee to be my Preserver, and likewise implore thy Grace, that I may behave myself in them with that Care, Caution, and Prudence, as to move thee to grant me all that Help which I want for my Security against Sin. Thus, O God, be thou my Guide and Protector, to carry me through all the Difficulties and Snares of this unhappy Life.

The W O R L D.

IT being an Effect, O God, of thy Mercy towards me, to give me this Opportunity of Prayer, which many others want, I desire to make the best Advantage of it I can, for the Glory of thy holy Name, and my eternal Good. Wherefore, being sensible how contrary the World is to thy Law, and by how many Ways it endeavours to draw me out of the Way of Happiness, I now desire to make an Interest with thee against it, for the Remedy of all its Evils, and in particular, that I may be more faithful to thee than to have any Part in them.

Turn now therefore, I beseech thee, thy Eyes towards me, an unhappy Creature, and have Compassion on me; for behold I am in the midst of many Dangers, and my Soul is encompassed with Snares. I am in the midst of a wicked World, a World which is created by thee, and is the Effect of thy infinite Power; a World which is daily replenished with infinite Blessings from thy bountiful Hand, and cannot subsist one Moment but by the Effect of thy infinite Goodness; a World which, being lost by Sin, has been the Object of thy most tender Compassion, and redeemed with no less a Purchase than the Blood of thy only Son: And yet, O God (I am confounded to say it) it is set in as direct an Opposition against thee, as if it had no Obligation to thee, nor Dependance on thee, and had no other Enemy but only thee alone. Nay, a Part of this World I am; and how ungratefully, how perversely miserable, if I join with it in its wicked Ways?

Wherefore I now make my Address to thy Goodness, O God, most earnestly imploring thy powerful Assistance, for the Help of this unhappy Sinner, against all the Dangers which threaten me on every Side. For this Weakness I must confess to thee, O God, that while I see and acknowledge this strange Blindness, Ingratitude, and Madness of the World, I am so far from hating it as I ought, that I am inclined

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to all its Ways; I think there is Happiness and Greatness in them; I apprehend them as desirable Goods; and I find so much of Agreeableness and Charm in them, that I am every Day in Danger of taking Part with the World, in what I so much condemn in it.

These being my unhappy Circumstances, have not I great Reason to implore thy Assistance, O God, where I am so much courted and strongly inclined to my own Destruction; stand by me therefore, I beseech thee, O God of Mercy, and undertake my Defence against these so much prevailing Dangers. Stretch forth thy Arm of Strength, and be my Protector, that I be not worsted in many Assaults, that are made against me. Behold, of myself, I am capable of no Defence; there is neither Security, nor Strength, nor Help in me; I can expect nothing, but to be carried away with the Violence of the Torrent, if thou, O God, dost not shew Mercy to thy Servant, and undertake my Cause.

Of this I have too sad a Conviction from the Evidence of my past Years. For what do I see in them, but Marks of a long Slavery to the World? What has my Life been, but the Homage of a captive Soul, seeking, admiring, courting, flattering, or fearing the World? Its Goods I have sought with Eagerness; its Greatness I have admired; its Commendation and Applause I have courted; and have spared no Cost, or Labour, or Contrivance, for obtaining what I so much desired; its Extravagancies I have made my Rule; it has been my great Solitude to follow them, and I have envied all those, who were better provided for coming nearer up to them, than myself; its Follies, Vanities, and idle Liberties have made greater Impressions in my Soul, than all the Promises of Eternity, and have been much more the Object of my Thoughts, my Desires, and my Contrivance; and, O unhappy Sinner that I am, how often have I, for the Sake of these, even forsaken thy Law, transgressed thy Commandments, and provoked thy Displeasure! Its Reproaches and Threats have, on the other Side, been as powerful with me; while, awed by the Apprehension

only of these, I have not only omitted what I thought my Duty, and knew would be well-pleasing to thee, but have often joined with Sinners in doing what my own Conscience and thy Law condemned, and thus have given evident Proof of my having a greater Fear of the World, than of thee.

Having so large a Demonstration against myself, of having made the World my Idol, of loving, serving, and fearing it more than thee, my God; have not I Reason to distrust myself; and, resting with my whole Confidence in thee, to confess that I have no Security against the Return of all this Unhappiness, except thou, O Lord, having Compassion on thy Servant; wilt mercifully prevent it by thy Grace? I again repeat therefore my Petition to thee, to take me into thy Protection, and to confirm me with heavenly Strength; that, for the Time to come, I may be more wise, more resolute, and more faithful than to be directed by the World, or have any Regard to it, farther than the Necessities of Life oblige me: And that it may be done, without Injury to these Duties which I owe to thee, my God.

This I beg of thee, with all the Earnestness of my Soul; because by the Experience I have had, and by what I read in thy sacred Word, I see very plainly, that the World is contrary to thee; and its Ways contrary to what thou teachest; and therefore that I cannot hear it, love it, and be directed by it, but by forsaking thee, and departing from those Paths, in which thou hast commanded me to walk. What therefore must I do, O God! since the World is contrary to thee, it must be the Effect of thy Grace, to strengthen me against it, or else I shall be left miserable, and perish with it.

This I say, and I hope from my Heart, and yet I cannot but suspect myself, as not fully convinced of this Perverseness of the World, and of its being so destructive to those that follow it. But where can be the Grounds for having a more favourable Opinion of it? Dost not thou see, my Soul, it sets up directly against all that Christ hath taught? Does it not encourage

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that Pride, which the Gospel condemns? Does it not promote Prodigality, Luxury, and all Manner of Excess? Does it not teach thee to court Applause, and by all Means to seek thy Interest, Esteem, and Preference? Does it not inspire thee with the Admiration of all that is vain, foolish and extravagant, and set off an idle, disorderly Life, as of all Things the most desirable?

Does it not persuade thee to flatter thy Appetite, to gratify thy Inclinations and Desires? Does it not give an ill Name to Virtue, represent it as a Burthen, as taking away all the Comforts of Life, and destructive of Health? Has it not laid it under such an ill Character, that Persons are now ashamed of doing what the Gospel prescribes; and to pretend to live up to it is to be pointed at with Reproach; whilst Vice is become so fashionable, that it is neither Matter of Surprise nor Scandal; and to undertake to provoke it is to stand against a Stream, and to be laughed at for Singularity? So that it is become a very difficult Thing for a Christian to live in the World and not join with it in its sinful Extravagancies, or not to share in its Guilt by flattering its senseless and unchristian Follies.

O God, I cannot but own this to be the unhappy Character of the World. Nay, I know, thou hast declared to us, That *the whole World lieth in Wickedness;* that *the Friendship of this World is Enmity with God;* that *whoever will be a Friend of the World is the Enemy of God.* Nay, I know farther, thou hast given us this express Command, *Love not the World, neither the Things that are in the World.* If any Man loves the World, the Love of the Father is not in him. And again hast repeated this Command, *Be not conformed to this World.* Where then, my Soul, canst thou now either demur or doubt? God has now told thee, what the World is; he has given his Command to thee, that thou art neither to love it nor be conformed to it: And what then hast thou now to do?

I have nothing to do, but to hear, believe, and obey thee, my God; for I have it now written in my

Heart, in thy own Words, that I am neither to love the World, nor follow it; and, if I do either, I am condemned in my own Conscience, of departing from thee, who alone hast the Words of eternal Life. But then, O God, I beseech thee, to look upon me, and consider the difficult Task I have; and according to my Necessities, to my Weakness, and to the manifold Dangers in which I am, and which are all-known to thee; so, O God, of Goodness and Mercy, be thou a Helper to me.

And in the first Place, I most earnestly beseech thee, to take from my Heart all the Love of the World, and of the Things that are in it. Grant, O God, that I may neither admire its Vanities, nor esteem its Greatness, nor desire any of its sinful and dangerous Entertainments. So disengage my Heart from all these, that I may not, like a Heathen or Unbeliever, look upon them, as the Comforts and Happiness of Life; but rather be afraid of them as the Gospel directs, and fly from them as the Snares of the Soul, which, by deceitful Flatteries, lead to eternal Death. For this End, I now most humbly ask thy Grace, that I may not receive the Notion of worldly Things from the World; but that, applying myself to the Study of the holy Gospel, I may in that School learn what every Thing is, and, as that teaches, so accordingly frame a Judgement of all earthly Things.

O God, how happy should I be, were my Heart truly possessed with these Ideas, which alone are according to Truth! How would this deliver me from infinite Temptations, and secure me in those great Dangers, where infinite Souls are lost! Then should I esteem all the vain Things of this World, as they deserve and are; that is, as Vanity and Smoke; and judge it most contemptible for a rational Soul, created for the eternal Possession of God, to take Pleasure and seek its Happiness in such Trifles. Then should I judge all that is sinful, as it is; fly from it as from the Way that leads to Hell; and see it to be Madness to lose Heaven for it.

Grant me, O God, this saving Knowledge, that I may no longer believe a Lye, and be wretchedly imposed

imposed on, to the evident Hazard of my Soul. Grant me this Knowledge, that my Heart, being possessed with the Truth of Things, my Inclinations may be lessened to all that is worldly, and I may rather hate than love, what is so destructive to my better Part. Help me, I beseech thee, in this Particular; purify my Soul from the Love of the World; create in me a clean Heart, that hating what is sinful, fearing what is dangerous, despising what is vain, I may be free from the Snares of a worldly Soul, and reserve my Heart for the Love and Desire of thee, my God, who alone art holy, who alone art good, and who alone art the true Happiness of faithful Souls..

Another Petition I make to thee, O God; that, by thy holy Grace, my Heart may be strengthened against all Invitations to what is worldly; that I may not be prevailed on by Company, to join in any Thing that in my own Conscience I know to be either sinful, dangerous, or extravagant; or any Ways disagreeable to the solemn Vow I made at the Font, of renouncing the Devil, with all his Works and Pomps. In this Particular, I am sensible of a great Weakness, and therefore, knowing my Danger, implore now thy Assistance; that I may be resolute in standing to the Principles of the Gospel: And rather choose to disoblige all Friends, than be persuaded to any Thing that will put me in Hazard of displeasing thee.

Grant me, likewise, that true Steadiness of Mind, that I may never be moved by *Custom*, or by the *Authority* of what others do; for I see these, in many Particulars, go beyond, if not contrary to what thy Law has prescribed us; and many Things are made current by them, which have no Warrant in Scripture, so that should I follow where these lead, it would be through a Way widened so very much, that, I fear, it would scarce bring me to Happiness. Rather, O Lord, let it be the Work of thy Grace in me, that I examine every Thing by that Rule, which my Redeemer has given me; and by this may I be ever directed, without any Regard to whatever the World approves or disapproves. For what can it be less than Madness for a Christian to consult the World, when he knows it lies

in Wickedness, and is contrary to God? Is this a Guide for one that believes in God! And what then must the Christian be, who, knowing what God has said, appeals from him to the World, to be informed what he is to do? Such Christians must be very willing to be led out of the Way. O God, I beseech thee, never let me be one of those unhappy ones, who, having Light to guide them, choose Darkness rather than Light.

To confirm me still more in this Point, grant, O merciful God, that I may have no Regard to what the World says; especially that I may not be awed by the Apprehension of its Censures; but, at all Times, be solicitous to know thy holy Will and do it; without ever being discouraged by its Cavils or Reproaches. This Grace I beg of thee, O God, with the more Earnestness, because I know my Weakness in this Particular; as being too much inclined to consider what Construction the World will put upon what I say or do; in which I see, how great a Temptation the World is to me, and what my Danger is, of being influenced by it, even while I pretend to follow thee. Have Compassion therefore on me, I beseech thee, and take away this Concern out of my Heart; or so lessen it, that I may resolutely and chearfully perform thy Will in all Things, and never be diverted or hindered by any Consideration of what will either please or displease the World. Be thou to me in all Things my Lord and my God; may I faithfully serve thee, as thy Creature: But as for making an Idol of the World, and having more Respect to it, than to thy holy Will; far, O God, far be this from me.

O God, by whose Grace, thy holy Patriarchs, *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, were so preserved amidst all the Dangers of this World, that, while they were exposed to its Temptations, and all their Lives were engaged in worldly Affairs, they still continued faithful to thee. Mercifully confirm my Heart by the same Grace; that, while I am engaged in this World, I may be careful in satisfying the Obligations of my State; without being drawn into Injustice, either by the Flatteries or Terrors of

of the World ; but amidst all Temptations, may I still remember, that thou art my God.

O God, who didst give to thy Servant *David* such a Spirit, that, notwithstanding all the Confusion of War, and the many unavoidable Distractions of a Crown, he still reserved his Heart to thee ; seeking thee daily in Prayer, and Fasting, and Tears, and Contrition, and meditating on thy Law both Day and Night : Grant me, I beseech thee, a large Portion of this same Spirit ; that I may learn the Practice of what I so much admire and want ; of being careful, without Solitude ; of deliberating, without losing myself ; of following Business, without running after Follies ; and of managing it, without Injustice ; of being attentive to the Obligations of Earth, without omitting any Duty to Heaven. Hear me, O God, and, according to thy infinite Goodness, grant this my Petition ; that, being placed in this World by thy Providence, I may have Patience under all its Necessities, and be neither oppressed by its Business, nor surprized in its Snares.

O God, by the Gift of whose Grace *Ester* was so confirmed in Spirit, that being raised from a Captive to a Queen, and encompassed with all the splendid Charms of a Court, she made this Declaration : That, from the Time she came to that Dignity, *she had no Joy but in thee* ; purify my Soul, I beseech thee, by the same Grace, that, being dead to the World, it may find no Comfort either in its Honours, Plenty or Pleasure. I wish I could say with holy *Ester*, that I never have had any Joy in these ; but pardon, O God, my past Follies ; and now grant me that happy Change, that, for the future, I may become insensible, as to to all the Invitations of Earth, and find no Joy but in thee.

O blessed Jefus, who didst declare thyself, and those, whom thou hast chosen, not be of the World ; mercifully grant, that, my Heart and Affections being taken off from the World, my whole Solitude may be to hear and follow thee ; that, being in the World, I may not be of it. For, O Jesus, if thou and thy chosen Servants are not of the World, how can I pretend to be thy Disciple, if the World be that which I seek,
love,

love, desire to please and enjoy? What can be more of the World, than to have a Heart so worldly?

O Jesus, who hast shewed us the Malignity of the World, in declaring, that it hated thee and thy Disciples; grant, I beseech thee, that from hence I may take the true Character of the World, and be ever afraid of loving it, since I must certainly be deceived in pretending to love thee, if I love that which hates thee. Root out therefore from my Soul all Love of the World, and turn my Heart against it; for what ought to be more detestable to a Disciple of Jesus, than that which is declared, by Truth itself, to be a Hater of Jesus?

O Jesus, who, by thy Apostle, hast published this Truth in us, that *the Friendship of this World is Enmity with God*, and that *whosoever will be a Friend of the World, is an Enemy of God*, I beseech thee to imprint this so deep in my Heart, that I may be as much afraid of loving the World, as of becoming thy Enemy. What can be more terrible to a Christian, than to be the Enemy of God? And yet it is God himself has said it; if I am a Friend of the World, I am the Enemy of God. O Jesus, and what has been (and is still) the great Business of my Life, but to court the World? In what has been taken up my great Solicitude and Contrivance, but to follow it in all its Vanities? Have not I earnestly desired it; eagerly sought it; given both my Thoughts, and Time, and Money for gaining it; and thought myself happy in the Possession of it? And what is it to be a Friend of the World, if this be not? And is not this to be thy Enemy? O God, work a Change in my Heart, that I may no more go on in this Way; but that I may be solicitous to depart from it, as from the Way that leads to an eternal Separation from thee.

O Jesus, who, by thy Apostles, hast commanded us, *Not to love the World, nor to be conformed to it*; grant, I may no more be governed by the Maxims of the World; nor have any Regard to such Customs and Practices of it, as being disagreeable to the Spirit of the Gospel, have no other Authority to recommend them but Pride or Extravagance. It is thou, who art my God, and

and not the World: It is thou, my Lord, whom I am bound to serve; may it be my perpetual Care to do thy Will, and, as for the World, teach me, O Jesus, to despise it.

O Jesus, who didst choose thy Apostles out of the World, and command them to forsake all and follow thee; mercifully vouchsafe to call me out of the World, that while I live in it, I may have no Part in its Sins, Vanities, or Follies; but that I may renounce all such Inclinations, and ever remember it to be my Duty, not to follow it, but thee. I know, all that is in the World, is Vanity and Affliction of Spirit; I know all its Greatness has its Trouble, and all its Satisfaction have their Sting; that all passes away like Smoke, and nothing remains of all the Labour and Cost employed in it: Thus will it soon be with all that I do. And is this enough to forsake God, and to take in Exchange for him; O Jesus, may I never be thus bewitched with Folly; teach me rather to despise, to renounce it all for the better securing my Inheritance in thee.

O Jesus, if I renounce the deceitful Follies of the World, thou hast promised to be my eternal Possession; and I believe thee, because thou art the eternal Truth, and canst not deceive, and, what a Mercy is it that thou art pleased to offer such Happiness upon such easy Terms! But what are become of all those who, for so many Ages past, have courted the World, have admired its Vanities, have run after its Charms, have sought its Greatness, and made all Christian Duties yield for accomplishing their Desires? Has the World made them happy? Has it secured them in the Possession of what they so much admired? They abode here for a short Time, for some passing Moments, but they are gone from hence, and are so much forgotten as if they never had been; their Flesh is long since devoured, and Rottenness has consumed their Bones. And their Souls, the better Part, which were created for God, where are they? They might have been with God, had they sought and served him as they did the World: But now they are left to the just Chastisement of their own Folly; they had such Happiness

Happiness as they sought; such as the World could give; but now they are under the Displeasure of neglected God, and, being doomed by a Sentence which cannot be reversed, have begun their Misery which shall never end. Unhappy, miserable, and wretched Souls, who might have had Part in the Happiness of God, and now have their Portion with the Devils, and this for to please a Carcass, and a treacherous World ! Ah, Jesus, deliver me, I beseech thee, from this Madness; give me Grace to perform the Conditions upon which eternal Bliss is offered me; give me Grace to renounce all the sinful Part of the World, and in Spirit to forsake the rest, that my Heart may have this one Solicitude alone of gaining thee. For what, O God, is all the World, compared to that Eternity which thou offereft to such as seek and love thee !

O Jesus, who being Lord of all, and having the whole World at command, didst choose so inconsiderable a Part as not to have where to lay thy Head; vouchsafe in thy Mercy to grant me this Spirit; that since the Necessities of my State tie me to some Dependance on this World, I may seek and be contented with so much of it as is necessary for my Subsistence here; and, O God, how little is enough, if we look no farther, than what Nature requires for Food and Raiment ! But, as for all the rest, which is demanded by Vanity, Appetite, and to please the World; let thy Grace work this good Effect in my Soul, that I may look upon all this as superfluous; as the Root of infinite Temptations; as that which draws the Soul into the World, and takes it off from the Concern of Eternity. O Jesus, if this Disposition were well fixed in my Soul, *To be contented with Necessaries*, how little a Part should I have in the World; nay, how little would this World be to me ? From how many Disquiets and racking Solitudes should I then be delivered, and what a peaceable Liberty would my Heart enjoy for conversing with thee, my God; for renewing thy holy Inspirations; for hearing thy Voice; for obeying thy Calls, and approaching by Love to thee ? Hear me therefore, O Jesus, and grant my Petition; that I may no longer go on, multiplying the Difficulties
of

of my Salvation, by unnecessarily engaging myself in the World, and every Day preparing Snares against my own Soul. Teach me to withdraw from the World; to withdraw at least from all the unnecessary Part of it; teach me to despise all that is dangerous, extravagant, and vain in it; teach me to love Solitude, for such Retirement as my State will permit, that, while I am in the World, I may not be of it. Teach me to take Delight in conversing with thee, in seeking thee, and in employing my Time in such holy and charitable Exercises, as are most acceptable to thee; that when I shall be called from hence, I may not be found a worldly Soul; but full of Joy, desirous to leave this World, and to be received into thy holy Presence.

Amen.

The G O S P E L.

I Desire to make use of the Opportunity thou hast given me, O God, this Day, in returning thee Thanks for the Mercy of the Gospel of thy only Son having been preached to us; by which we are instructed in the Way of Salvation, and taught all those Truths which thou requirest thy Faithful to believe. For this Effect of thy Goodness, blessed be thy Name: Behold, I bow down before thee, I adore, praise, and magnify thy holy Name, and with all Humility desire, that whatever Knowledge I have of thee may be wholly employed to thy Glory. I thank thee likewise, for that, by the Appointment of thy Providence, the holy Gospel has been committed to Writing; and not only wonderfully preserved through so many Ages, but likewise carefully delivered down to our Days, for our Comfort and Instruction.

Grant, O God, that I may always acknowledge this thy Mercy with Thanksgiving; and this not only in Words, but in making a good Use of it. May I never take it from the Pastors of thy Church into my Hand, but with the Respect that is due; and, as often as I read it, let it be with the Desire of knowing thee, my God; of knowing thy Justice, that I may fear to offend thee; of knowing thy Mercy, that, notwithstanding my Unworthiness, I may still confide in thee; of knowing thy Power, that I may be ever sensible of my

my entire Dependance on thee, and learn to be faithful. Open likewise, I beseech thee, my Understanding, that I may have a true Sense of what I read; and let my Reading be always attended with such a true Spirit of Humility, that I may be contented under the Darkness of such Mysteries as I cannot comprehend. Deliver me from all Self-conceit and Stubbornness of Judgement; that I may nor pervert the Law, against the Law-giver, nor abuse thy Words in opposing thy Truths or Ordinances.

I know the Danger of Mistakes here; since in whatever mistaken Sense I understand thy sacred Word, I set up such Mistakes as thy divine Truths; I respect them as divine, I believe them as divine, I hear and follow them as divine. And what is this but canonizing my own Fancies, and stamping thy Divinity on my own false Imaginations? It is setting up Idols within myself; and reverencing that as the Word and Truth of God, which is nothing but a vain Conceit of my own. And how unhappy then must I be, in this Case, who going on with Peace of Conscience, and presuming that I follow thee, do, instead of thee, follow and believe a Lye! Against this Idolatry, I own thou hast sufficiently cautioned me, by informing me, That no Prophecy of the Scripture is of any private Interpretation; And that the Unlearned and Unstable wrest it to their own Destruction. Mercifully therefore deliver me from this Presumption; that I may never be so sacrilegious as to turn this divine Food into Poison, and pervert that to Death, which thy infinite Goodness has designed for Life. Keep me, I beseech thee, within the Bounds of my Station, and permit me not to break into thy Sanctuary: And since thy holy Scriptures were not penned, but as Men of God were moved by the Holy Ghost; so let me not depend on any Interpretation of them, but as it comes from the same holy Spirit; and there may I seek to hear him, where thou hast promised, he shall abide and teach all Truth to the End of the Word.

But let not this be thy only Mercy to me, that I hear the Truth of thy Word from thy holy Spirit; for this can

can avail me nothing, except I keep thy Word in Truth, as well as hear it. Shew therefore, I beseech thee, this Mercy to me, thy Servant, that I may not be contented with the Knowledge of thy Gospel, but that I may be always solicitous to make this the Rule of my Life. Grant, that in all Things I may walk according as thou hast here prescribed; that I may here see what is the Duty, and what ought to be the Life of a Christian; that I may here enquire what thou approvest, and what thou disapprovest; and so accordingly do in all Things, as thou hast been pleased there to manifest thy Will for our Direction..

I confess, that as thou art my Lord and my God, and as I depend on thee alone, for the future Happiness which I expect; so it is most reasonable and just that I should seek to do thy Will, and to work out my Salvation in such a Manner, and by such Means, as thou hast been pleased to prescribe. For see, my Soul, is there any Power by which thou canst be saved, except by God alone? Is there any other that can promise thee Happiness, or secure thy Eternity? No, my God, I confess it again, there is no other, and that I must either seek to do thy Will, or be lost for ever.

I confess moreover, that as there is no Salvation, but through Jesus Christ; so there is nothing to be obtained through him, but by such as observe his Words, and walk by his Doctrine, as it is set down in the Gospel, and there recorded for the Direction of all his Followers: And consequently, if I neglect the Gospel, and do not make it the Business of my Life to walk by it, I build upon the Sand without a Foundation, and shall certainly perish with my Hopes.

See then and recollect a while some of those Principles which the Gospel teaches; and observe how far thou endeavourest to live by them: First, I am there commanded to love God with all my Heart and Strength; to keep the Commandments; to seek first the Kingdom of God; to seek and set my Affection on Things above, and not on Things on Earth; to put on our Lord Jesus Christ; to live and walk by his Spirit; to keep his Day holy; not to take his Name in vain; nor to swear, &c.

2dly,

2dly, I am commanded to love my Neighbour as myself ; to do Good to all ; to love my Enemies ; to keep Peace ; to forgive Injuries ; to do Good for Evil ; to pray for those that persecute and curse me ; to avoid Contention ; to speak Evil of none ; to defraud, over-reach, and do wrong to none ; not to lye nor steal ; to put away from me all Bitternes, and Wrath, and Malice ; to let no corrupt or filthy Communication to proceed out of my Mouth, nor any Uncleanness to be once so much as named ; to give Offence to none ; to abstain from all Appearance of Evil ; to do all to Edification ; to relieve the Poor ; to visit the Fatherless and Widow ; to let my Conversation be, as becomes the Gospel of Christ, and walk worthy of my Vocation.

3dly, I am commanded to deny myself ; to put off the Old Man ; to mortify the Deeds of the Body ; not to be carnally minded ; to crucify the Flesh ; to abstain from the fleshy Lusts which war against the Soul ; to put on the New Man ; to have Christ dwell in me ; to walk in his Spirit ; to become a new Creature ; not to walk in Rioting and Drunkenness, but to live soberly, righteously, and godly ; not to exalt myself, nor be high-minded, nor be wise in my own Conceit, nor do any Thing through Vain-glory ; not to commend myself, nor be desirous of Vain-glory, nor be proud ; but to be meek and lowly in Heart, and to humble myself ; not to murmur, not be tired, impatient, or faint-hearted ; but to suffer all Troubles with Submission and Patience, according to the Example of Christ ; not to live an idle and unprofitable Life ; but to watch, pray, fast, abound in good Works, and bring forth Fruit to Life everlasting ; not to love the World, but to be poor in Spirit ; to be afraid of Riches ; to look upon the Things highly esteemed amongst Men, as an Abomination in the Sight of God ; to love nothing above God ; to renounce all Things for the Law of God ; to do all in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ ; to see that God be glorified in all Things ; to be moderate in all Things ; to be without Solicitude ; to think on and follow whatever Things are honest, whatever Things are just, whatever Things are pure, whatever Things are :

are of good Report, and to offer myself a living Sacrifice to God.

Observe, my Soul, what thy Lord here says to thee; these are some principal Rules given thee by thy Redeemer Jesus Christ; and thou, in professing thyself a Christian, undertakest to keep them: This is thy Profession, and thou canst no otherwise satisfy the Obligation of thy Name and Calling but by proposing them as thy Rule, and continually endeavouring to bring thy Life up to them. Hear this from the Mouth of Christ himself; for it is he has said; *If ye abide in my Word, then are ye my Disciples indeed:* And is not this to give thee a positive Assurance, that thou canst not be his Disciple indeed, if thou dost not abide in his Word and keep it? O blessed Jesus, it has been thy Goodness to call me to a Faith in thee, and to hear thy Word; let it be now the Effect of the same Goodness, to make me zealous in keeping it, that besides the Name, I may be likewise a Disciple indeed.

It is he likewise, the good Shepherd, has said; That his Sheep *bear his Voice and follow him;* that *he has given unto them eternal Life;* and *they shall never perish.* And dost not thou see here, that, to be one of his Fold, thou must not only *bear his Voice,* but thou must likewise *follow him?* And, if thou dost not follow him, thou hast not the Character of those who are to receive from him eternal Life, and shall never perish. And has not he again published the same, in declaring those, *bleffed who bear the Word of God and keep it?*

I confess it, O Jesus, that these are thy Words; and as I have a Faith in thee, my Redeemer, so I believe thee in this; that I can no otherwise be thy Disciple, but by making it my daily Endeavour to keep thy Word, and that upon no other Condition can I be of thy Fold, and expect the Blessing of eternal Life, which thou hast promised. And what do I now do in this, but condemn myself, if I do not keep thy Words and observe the Rule which thou hast given me! Compare then thy Life with the Rule, and see, upon what Foundation thy Hope stands. Do I love God with all my Heart? Do I seek him before all Things? Do I walk by the Spirit of Christ? Have I put off the Old Man?

Man? Do I not love the World? Do I follow Humility, Meekness and Patience?

Under what Confusion now is my distempered and unhappy Soul! I confess there is no Hope of future Happiness, but upon walking by the Gospel; and, when I begin to take a Review of myself, I find the State of my Soul quite contrary to what is prescribed; nothing is as it ought to be, O God, and what is now left for me to do, but to appeal to thy Goodness to have Compassion on me! I confess my great Unworthiness, in having so many Years made Profession of being thy Disciple, without having ever seriously considered the Conditions which thou offeredst to thy Followers. I confess my Iniquity, in having undertaken to serve thee; and now, in making up my Accounts, I find I have been in the Service of thy Enemies; I have followed the World and my own Corruption; and to these have turned the great Endeavours of my Life; having reserved only some few Formalities with some Lip-service for thee, my God.

What is there in my whole Life, but a long Series of Vanity, Idleness, Prodigality, and Excess? What has there been but a Change of Pride and Self-love in all their Shapes? And if I have ever pretended to amend, what has this been more, but some short Interruption of my Follies, or the shifting from one Evil to another? Have not I lived almost in a general Forgetfulness of thee, my God? And instead of loving and seeking thee, before all Things, I have given my Heart to the Things of this World, and even preferred the vilest of them before thee. Thus have I neglected thy Gospel? Nature and the World have been my Rule; the Business and Follies of this World have been my Employment; Idleness and Sin have been my Satisfaction; the Goods of the Earth have been the Object of my Desire and Labour; and Heaven has been as little my Concern, as if it were a Matter of Indifference, whether I gained it or not.

All this my Misery, and much more, is known to thee, O God, and from thee alone is the Remedy to come; for although I have thus unworthily forsaken thee; yet still I confess all my Help is in thee; whose Goodness

Goodness I believe so infinite, that the Number of my past Sins ought not to destroy my Hope of finding in thee the Remedy of all my Unhappiness. Raised therefore by this Hope, I now make my Address so thy Throne of Mercy, most humbly beseeching thee, to look with Compassion upon this unworthy Sinner, and to grant my Petition: And that is, that thy holy Word may be a Light to my Feet, that I may be directed by it in all my Ways; and that thy sacred Gospel may be the Rule of my Life.

It is only by this Way I can return to thee, my God; and whatever may be proposed, yet I know there is no other Help for me, but in this. Hear therefore, I beseech thee, the Prayer I make to thee, and grant my Request. Fix this Principle in my Soul, that nothing can be well done, nothing beneficial to me, nothing acceptable to thee, but what is according to the Gospel. Hence, O God, let thy holy Grace always carry me on in this constant Practice of examining all Things by the Gospel, and not to take any Thing for good and lawful but as it stands there approved by thee.

Far be it therefore from me, for what remains of my Life, to consider my own Inclination, or to consult the World, or the Customs and Practices of worldly Persons. These are fit Guides for such Christians, as, being without the Life of Faith, seek their Happiness in pleasing themselves and the World: But as for me, O God, who have renounced this Practice of Unbelievers, and desire with all my Soul to walk in all thy Ways, to do thy Will, and serve thee faithfully; let thy Grace so work in my Heart, that I may never more have Regard to the Suggestions of such false Guides which lead to Sin and Death; but that I be directed in all Things by a better Light, even the Light of thy Gospel, and by this be governed in whatever I am to do.

I am sensible of many Difficulties I shall certainly meet in this Way. Nature will be uneasy and rebel; I shall be exposed to Variety of Censures; and, if the World cannot prevail with the Arguments of Authority and Custom, it will try what may be done with Reproach and Scorn. But, O God, none of these, I hope,

hope, through thy Grace, shall discourage me. For what is Nature and the World but Corruption? Being contrary to thee, their Opposition must be expected by such as resolve to do thy Will. But what is their Opposition to a Soul that has Eternity in its Eye, and is marching on strongly towards it? They may give Disquiets; but certainly, neither their Flattery, nor their Scorn, can be of any Weight, when Eternity is on the other Side. No, my God, they are nothing.

But such is my Weakness, I cannot yet confide, but only in thy Protection. Strengthen me therefore, I beseech thee, against all such Opposition; and by thy Grace carry me on, in the Way I propose, with so much Steadiness, that whatever Discouragements I meet, I may still pursue my Course; always attentive to thy Law, and walking by it; and pitying those who make use of Custom or Reproach, to persuade me to leave my Guide. I own it my Profession to follow the Gospel, and have in this the Comfort of being led by thee. And shall any Thing prevail to make me quit this Happiness? Suffer me not, I beseech thee, to be thus blind; since whatever it be that prevails against the Gospel, so far takes place of thee; and what greater Madness, what grosser Idolatry than this!

If then Custom at any Time be pressed, give me Courage to profess that thou, Lord, art my God; and that I cannot give Custom the Preference to thee. If scornful Censures follow me close, let me still profess that thou art my God whom I have chosen, and be more serious in my Profession, than to be laughed out of my Duty. If I had never been told what the World is, its Authority might have inclined me to hearken to it, and to have regarded its Ways. But now, when thou thyself hast informed me what it is, and that its Aversion is so great to thy Ways, as even to hate thee; and that thy Followers are likewise to be the Object of its Hatred; how can I think of giving ear to it, or what need I to be concerned either at its Advice or Censures? If I regard it in either Way, it is an evident Sign I have little Regard to thee, who hast given me such

such Caution against it. And what then must be my Crime, if I not only hearken to it, but am awed by its Authority, seek its Approbation, fear its Reproof, consult it in all I have to do, and even take its Opinion, in expounding and making Comments on thy Gospel; and this, when thou hast assured me, that it hates thee?

O God, if I have been so unchristian, it is what I am ashamed of, and now heartily desire to amend. Wherefore I now take thy Gospel for my Guide again, with all the Earnestness of my Soul, beg thy Grace, that in all Things I may be governed by it, and may never more permit any Thing in this World to draw me out of the Way which it teaches. Confirm me, I beseech thee, in this Resolution; carry me on with Constancy and Perseverance, and let thy Grace establish my Heart against all Opposition. My Desire is to walk in thy Ways; and of whom should I learn thy Ways but of thee? My Desire is to come to thee, and who can better teach the Ways that lead to thee, than thyself? May I never therefore consult or take that for my Guide, which, being contrary to thee, must certainly put me out of the Way.

O God, who so often didst give in Charge to thy People, to keep thy Precepts, observe thy Statutes and Judgements, and to walk in thy Law; and, upon this Condition only, didst promise thy Protection and Blessings to them: Mercifully grant I may always have this in my Remembrance; and that the Hope which is in me, of coming to thy Promises, may be always attended with a perpetual Care, and zealous Endeavour for observing thy Law, and performing whatever thou requirest of me.

O God, who didst order thy Servants *Moses* and *Aaron* to consult thee in all Things, and to know thy Will in whatever they were to undertake: Grant I beseech thee, that I may always follow this Method of enquiring what is thy holy Will: And since thou hast been pleased to manifest thy Will in the Gospel, give me Grace at all Times to consult this, and there to see what my Lord speaks to me; and, O God, let it be

be my constant Practice, to do in all Things as thou directest.

O God, by whose Grace those good Kings, *David*, *Hezechias* and *Josiah*, did observe thy Ordinances and Statutes, and walk in all thy Precepts. Grant I may be always mindful of this being my Duty; and that, having thy Precepts recorded in the Gospel, I may always remember that is my Rule; and that I can no otherwise expect thy Favour, but by walking in all Things according as thou hast there commanded.

O God, who didst forsake even thy chosen People, and deliver them up to Captivity and Destruction, because they departed from thy Law which thou gavest them to keep: Mercifully possess my Heart with the Fear of transgressing thy Commands; and since the Gospel now succeeds the Law, and is delivered to us to be observed by a greater Authority; may I be always mindful of the great Obligation I have of following it; and that, if I follow it not, I provoke thy Displeasure, shall be rejected by thee, and reserved for heavier Judgements, than those which were the Punishment of the *Jews*.

O blessed Jesus, who becamest Man for the Redemption of Man, and both by Doctrine and Example hast taught him the Way to Salvation: Mercifully grant, that, as I hope for no Salvation but through thee; so I may be ever careful to direct my Life in all Things, according as thou hast taught.

O Jesus, who hast declared thyself to be the Light of the World; grant that I may, all my Life, take thee for my Guide, and blush under the Profession of thy Name, to follow any other, while I have you to lead me. I confess, O Jesus, thou art the substantial Sovereign and original Reason; and that I am not capable of discerning Truth from Falshood, nor Good from Evil, but only as Light is communicated from thee, who art the eternal Reason; vouchsafe, I beseech thee, to communicate thyself still more and more to my Soul, so to chase away from it whatever yet remains of false Light and true Darkness, that I may loye thee above all, follow thee before all, and give thy holy Gospel the Preference,

ference to all other Light, that offers itself for my Conduct.

O Jesus, who art the Way, the Truth, and the Life; the Way, by thy Example; the Truth, by thy Word; the Life, by thy Grace: I confess, that out of this Way there is nothing but going astray; without this Truth, there is nothing but Error and Deceit; without this Life, there is nothing but Death: Grant therefore, I beseech thee, that I may never transfer to any Thing of this World, what thou hast thus appropriated to thyself; since I can expect nothing less, but to be led out of the Way, to meet with Error and Death, if neglecting thee, who hast undertaken this Charge, I depend on any Thing else. O Jesus, behold I stretch forth my Hand to thee to be recovered from all my evil Ways: I open my Ears to thee, to be taught the Truth: I open my Heart, that I may receive thy Life of Grace.

O Jesus, whom by a Voice from Heaven, we are commanded to hear; and who, by thy own sacred Mouth, hast declared, that, if we hear not thee, we are not of God: Grant me this Grace, I beseech thee, that I may always hear thee; that I may be taught by thee, and not by the World; that from thee I may learn what is honourable, what is great, what is valuable, what is base, what contemptible, what is to be sought, what desired, what feared, what to be despised, what abhorred, and what to be fled from. All this the World undertakes to teach; and it has great Numbers of Hearers and Followers; but the World being false, all that hear it hear a Lye, and all that follow it follow Deceit. It is thou, O Jesus, who art the only Truth, and I cannot be led in the Way of Truth, except I hear thee. Grant me then this my Request, that I may hear and believe what thou teachest; this can be the only Way to Happiness, since I have thy Word for it, that they who hear thee not, are not of God.

O Jesus, who didst call upon *Saul* in the Way, going to persecute thy Servants, and by whose Grace he was so changed, as to surrender himself entirely to thy holy Will, with this Oblation of himself; *Lord, what*

wilt thou have me do? Grant, I beseech thee, that by the Call of the same Grace I may be stopped in whatever Ways I go contrary to thy blessed Will; and that now, with the Sincerity of St. Paul, I may offer myself to follow no other Guide but thee alone. Behold now, I say, and, I hope, from my Heart, *Lord, what wilt thou have me do?* Let not the World, nor worldly Persons, speak to me; but speak thou, Lord, to thy Servant, and teach me thy Will. But this Mercy I have already received; thou hast taught me, in the Gospel, thy holy Will, and, if I walk not by that, I own, there can be no Sincerity in my Desire of being taught by thee.

Good Government of the Tongue.

COnvinced of my own Weakness, by the sad Experience of many Sins, I now come to ask Help of thee, my God; and, in particular, this Day, that I may obtain thy holy Grace, for the Government of my Tongue, so as to prevent the Return of those many Sins, by which I have hitherto offended thee in Words.

And in the first Place, I petition for the Help of thy Grace, that I may no more take thy holy Name in vain. In this Particular I confess my Sin to thee, O God; that, not considering the holy Respect due to thy Name, I have often used it vainly, heedlessly, and unprofitably; I have made it serve for every idle Exclamation; and, whether in Joy or Sorrow, have still made this the common Expression of every Surprize or Passion: So that, whether pleased, or displeased, I have still prophaned thy holy Name.

This, I confess, has been a great Weakness and Blindness in me; That whereas thou hast given me this Charge amongst the very first of thy Commandments, and expressly forbidden me to take thy Name in vain; I have, notwithstanding, gone on unthinkingly in this Practice, as if it were wholly innocent, and I had never heard of any Command to the contrary.

But behold now, my God, I beg Pardon for the infinite Times I have, in my past Life, thus prophaned or abused

abused thy holy Name; as likewise for the Scandal and ill Example I have given by so doing. I am sensible how forward some are in learning what they hear; and how others are inclined to think that innocent which they see generally practised. Now, how must this raise thy Account, who, by an ill Custom of so many Years, have taught others to offend, and bring thy Name, O God, into Contempt?

But forgive me now, I beseech thee, and give me Grace to amend; give me Grace to be watchful in overcoming this ill Custom; for, although I resolve upon Amendment, I know my Resolutions will come to nothing, except by due Watchfulness I keep a Guard upon my Lips, and by continual Solicitude endeavour to prevent all Relapse, into which, otherwise, I shall unthinkingly fall.

For thus I have been already often surprised, falling under this Guilt, without thinking what I say. And upon this Head I am easy in excusing myself, because whatever I do, of this Kind, is generally without Reflection. And yet, O God, I have Reason to fear thy Judgements will be very different from mine: Since upon better Consideration I can likewise apprehend, that it must be a great Fault in me, to let this ill Practice grow into such a Custom, as to run naturally into Sin, without seeing or knowing what I do. And does not this plainly discover a great Indisposition of Soul, even at present; that I have not that true Fear of offending God as I ought? For, were my Soul duly possessed with this holy Fear, it is impossible I should have Sin so often upon my Lips, in my Ears, and before my Eyes, and not start at it, as at a Monster. If I fear God, why have I not a Horror of Sin? How can I meet it at every Turn, and pass it by without any Concern? Can I do thus with a Snake or Viper, or with an Enemy that I fear?

It is plain too, that I have not that true Respect for God as I ought, nor am so zealous for his Honour; since, wherever this Respect and Zeal are, they presently are in Motion, and conceive a Horror of whatever is a Prophanation to him. Can Zeal stand unconcerned when it sees the Vessels of the Temple put

to common Uses? Can the Altar of God be pulled down and trampled on by sacrilegious Feet, and Zeal stand by without observing it? How then can the Zeal of God be in me, who am so often offering Violence to the most sacred Name of God, to that Name which God has declared to be holy, and commanded me to keep holy, and yet be unconcerned, unmoved, and even not to take Notice of what is done.

O God, I acknowledge the Fault, and see there lies a very great Neglect at the Root of it, which I now implore thy Grace to remedy. Let it be the Effect of thy Grace in me, I beseech thee, not only to pretend, but to have a real Zeal for thy Honour; such a Zeal as will tolerate nothing disrespectful to thee, and will not lie still while thy holy Name is profaned; such a Zeal as will set a Watch upon my Lips, and permit nothing to pass there uncensured, which, not regarding the Sanctity of thy Name, puts it to common Uses. Make me thus wathful, O God, and let me never believe that I love thee, till by the Fear of offending I have reformed this ill Custom, and never more take thy holy Name in vain.

Help me, O God, in this Particular, and let not this Desire of Amendment pass away, as a barren Thought without Fruit; but grant I may see the Effect of my Desires. Grant I may be truly in earnest, and even desire Friends to put me in Mind of my Fault, if I still continue heedless, and unknowingly go on to offend thee. And if this will not do, why should I not punish my Heedlessness, and by due Correction awaken my Soul to a greater Care? This Method I think reasonable with others under my Care, to use Correction where Advice is without Effect: And if this Correction be what Duty, and Love, and Charity require, why should not I be as charitable to myself, as to others, and omit nothing that may be a Means of Amendment? O God, never let me spare myself, where Justice calls for Punishment; where an obstinate or careless ill Custom wants Correction, and where sparing is in Favour of Sin. If I do otherwise, there is too much Reason to believe, I am not in earnest, in what I propose, desire, or resolve.

And

And ought not this much more to be done, if I have a Custom of prophaning the Name of God, by swearing, cursing, or any Kind of Oaths? These are certainly the greater Sins, and give the much greater Scandal; they are more injurious to God, are so much against Charity, and lay the Name of God under such intolerable Contempt, that they ought not to be found in the Mouths of Christians, but only of Devils. Wherefore, I beseech thee, O God, to give me such an Abhorrence of these, that I may never be thus profane; and that, as far as I am subject to any Custom of this Kind, I may leave no Way untried, till I have overcome it. What is there too much for me to suffer, if I know myself to be such a Criminal? And what can be too hard to undertake, if it be with Hopes of Amendment? Am I fit to enter into the Company of those happy Souls, who are always blessing God, if I should be now called out of this World? Can I expect my Prophanations and Curses should be changed into Allelujahs? What then is it I do? Not fit to die, and yet go on without doing any Thing, in order to become better! He that drove the profane Traders out of the Temple with a Scourge, tells me what is waiting for me if I do not amend. He tells me that Prophaneness deserves a Scourge, and is to be punished, if not cured by it. I have no other Way then of escaping the Scourge in God's Hand, but by taking it into my own, and using Violence against that which will not be better by milder Methods. Grant, O God, that I may use such Means as may be effectual, through thy Blessing, for remedying the Disorder of my Soul.

Another Blessing I ask of thee, Father of Mercy, that, by the Help of thy holy Grace, I may be preserved from the Sin of Lying; because I know this is contrary to thy great Attribute of Truth, and is an Abomination to thee. And in the first Place preserve me, I beseech thee, from all Lyes of Malice, such as besides the great Offence against thee, are injurious to my Neighbour. These are Sins against Charity, or that great Precept of loving my Neighbour; it being

impossible, I should have this Love of my Neighbour in my Heart, if I not only am desirous to hurt him, but likewise invent Lyes, so to discharge my Malice against him! And if I have not Charity, how desperate must my Condition be, since without this, I have thy Word for it, that neither Faith, Alms, nor Martyrdom, will be available, and that I am not in a State of Salvation? *

O God, what an unhappy State is this, through the great Deformity and Provocation of this Sin! Wherefore, I most humbly beseech thee, O God, through thy Bowels of Mercy, to forgive me whatever Degree of Guilt I have at any Time contracted in my Life past, by this Kind of Lying, whether through Rashness, Passion, or Malice. For however great my Sin has been, yet I know thy Mercy is infinitely greater than my Wickedness; and, if I sincerely from my Heart repent, I have a Hope in thy Goodness, through the Merits of Christ, my Redeemer, I shall receive Pardon.

Behold then, O God, I protest before thee, it grieves me from my Heart, that I have thus yielded to my Passion, and in Compliance with this, despised thy Will, and trampled upon thy Commandments. I am heartily sorry for whatever Injury I have done my Neighbour, by my malicious or rash Accusations. I resolve, through thy Grace, to make him Recompence for what he has suffered through my Weakness; and I beseech thee, O Father of Mercies, to encrease thy Blessings upon him, and to let thy Goodness abundantly supply whatever he has been wronged by me.

But then, O God, let thy Goodness so favour me, thy unworthy Petitioner, as mercifully to forgive me my Sin, and to possess my Soul with such a real Horror of it, as never more to fall under the Guilt of it again. Strengthen me, I beseech thee, for this End, by thy holy Grace, that I may no more yield myself a Captive to my Passion, and be blindly led by it into Wickedness. Help me to stifle all such sinful Suggestions; and may I rather choose to suffer all Injuries chearfully, and forgive them, as thou hast commanded, than seek to gratify my own Corruption, by offending thee,

thee, by wronging my Neighbour, and bringing eternal Ruin upon myself. Thus, O God, by the Effect of thy holy Grace, may all Relapses into this Iniquity be prevented.

Preserve me likewise, I beseech thee, O God, from all those Lyes which are in the Service of Vanity. I confess my Weakness in this Point, and that, upon infinite Occasions, I am in Danger of falling into this Sin; but, how many Times I have incurred the Guilt of it, is known only to thee, O God. But, behold, I come now before thee to ask for Mercy. I am sensible the Provocation must be very great, for such a poor and sinful Worm as I am, to be so solicitous for the good Opinion of the World, as to take Shelter in a Lye, as often as it seems serviceable for patching up my Reputation, and thus to set thy holy Will and Commandments under my Feet, whenever a vain Humour is in Want of such a Support.

How prophanè and sacrilegious does this look, upon such trivial Occasions, to make bold with thy Commands! To prostitute thy holy Law to my Vanity! O God, be merciful to me, and pardon me my repeated Iniquity. I am truly confounded at the Thought of it, that I should profess thee to be my God, and that my whole Dependance, both temporal and eternal, is on thee; and yet to have no more Respect for thy Precepts, than to let every idle Humour withdraw me from my Obedience: O God, I can make no Excuse for this my Weakness, my Unworthiness, and my Folly. I know it deserves Chastisement: I own the Sin, and shall confess thy Judgements to be just, if I feel thy Scourge.

But however, O my God, knowing how infinite thy Mercies are, I beseech thee to have Regard to the Sighs of a poor Sinner. I confess now my Sin before thee, and from my Heart grieve that I have been so unworthy. I here renew my Purposes of being more faithful to thee; and make now a Protestation, that, through the Help of thy Grace, I will tell no more Lyes in Compliance with Vanity; but make it my Choice, for the Time to come, rather to lose the good Opinion

of others, than seek it by Untruths, and by offending thee.

Help me, O most gracious Lord, in faithfully performing what I here propose; for I have no Trust in myself, but all my Confidence is in thee. Look then down, I beseech thee, upon a poor, unhappy Sinner, and, since my Desires of Amendment are sincere, favourably grant my Petition, and, by thy holy Grace, confirm me against all my usual Weakness. Lessen in me all Inclinations to Vanity, and let the Fear of offending thee give an effectual Check to all its sinful Suggestions. Let my great Concern be not to please the World, but thee, my God; let me not be solicitous what Men say of me, but only to be in thy Favour. Let thy holy Love rule in my Heart, and then my great Business will be to keep thy Commandments; and I shall think nothing of this World so valuable, as for it to incur thy Displeasure.

Besides this Mercy, I have still another to ask of thee; that thou preserve me from all executive Lyes. In this I confess myself subject to a very great Weakness; being ever ready with a Lye, as often as it seems necessary for concealing my Faults, Weakness, Forgetfulness, Overights, Mistakes or Neglects. In these, and infinite other Occasions, I make a Lye my Defence, and hide one Fault with another. But for this, O God, I now beg thy Mercy, beseeching thee to have Compassion on me, an unworthy Sinner, who have so many Times, even without Number, forgotten or neglected thy holy Will, and have let every trivial Occasion be enough for me to offend against it.

In this I see a very great Weakness in myself, who rather than bear any Blame, though it be what I deserve, choose to incur thy Displeasure, and at any Time, venture thy Anger to save myself from the Anger or ill Opinion of Men. In this, I confess, O God, there is no Sign that I either love thee or fear thee, since being obliged to do thy Will, and so to give it the Preference to all other Things, as to suffer all Extremities, rather than transgress it, I let every Thing take Place, and have not Courage to suffer the least Inconvenience for

for thy Sake. Ah, wretched Creature, is this to be a faithful Servant to thy God? If he be thy God, where is thy Respect? Where is thy Solicitude to please him, and thy Fear to offend him?

And is there not a great Unworthiness in this; that whereas thou pretendest to trust in God, and to seek Help from him in all Difficulties, thou no sooner apprehendest any Difficulties, but presently, unmindful of thy Profession, thou runnest to the Devil for Help, and takest up his Arms to defend thyself? For what is a Lye? Is it not from the Devil? Is it not the Help which he offers thee? It is what thou coughtest to renounce, as unworthy of thy Profession; and, instead of this, thou readily acceptest his Offer, and art pleased in being thus protected. Ah, my Soul, blush in being thus false to what thou hast undertaken. Consider the Baseness of this Submission. Humble thyself before thy God, beg Pardon for the many Times thou hast thus offended, and resolve now no more to seek Help from him who designs nothing but thy Ruin.

O merciful God, pardon me this my great Weakness and Unworthiness, and give me Grace now to detest it, as it deserves. May I now conceive that true Horror of it, as to resolve never to make Use of such unchristian Help, but willingly to bear any Reproof or Reproach, rather than be protected by a Lye. This, O God, is my sincere Desire, and I beseech thee now so to strengthen my Soul, that I may see my Desires accomplished, that I may break off all ill Customs, and be more watchful against all Surprises. I am sensible how averse Self-love is to all Kinds of Suffering, and I know too there is Comfort in such Suffering, which a Christian submits to, rather than to save him by a Lye; because this is all for Duty Sake, and embraced as much better, than to purchase an Exemption by Sin. This Comfort I desire to seek for the Time to come; the Comfort of suffering for Conscience, rather than accept of such Peace, as is not from thee.

Besides this, I beg likewise thy Grace, O God, to be preserved from all inconsiderate Lies; such as are

occasioned by Rashness, or too great a Forwardness in speaking. This, I know, is another Weakness, displeasing to thee, O God, by offending against Truth; and of ill Repute amongst Men, as proceeding from a certain Lightness of Mind, and laying those, who are subject to it, under the Disreputation, *of not being to be regarded in what they say*. Against this Evil therefore, O loving Father, I ask thy Assistance; beseeching thee to give me such a Zeal for Truth, that I may be considerate and wary in every Thing I say, so as never to let my Tongue get the Start of my Thoughts, and be thus ever in Danger of doing Violence to Truth. Deliver me, I beseech thee, from all Talkativeness and Inconsiderateness, the Origin of many Sins, and very serviceable to the Devil. Give me the Spirit of Discretion and Wisdom; such Wisdom, as may discover to me my own Weakness, and make me very careful in providing against all the evil Effects of it. Teach me to keep a seasonable Silence, and to have a true Value for it, that I may make it my constant Practice, rather to say nothing, than to offend, by speaking. This will not be so entertaining: But, O God, I own it both my Business and Interest, not to please the World, but thee.

§. II. Preserve me likewise, O God, from all other Sins of the Tongue; from all irreligious and prophane Discourse; let nothing that is filthy or immodest be heard from my Mouth: Deliver me from all Hypecrisy and Dissembling; and let me never speak in Defence of what is unjust or false; far be it from me, to join in stifling or opposing the Truth; let me never ridicule or expose to Scorn the Ways or Sayings of such as are virtuous; because I know, all these are so many Ways of joining with the Devil, and becoming instrumental with him, to the Ruin of my own Soul, and of others.

Grant again, most merciful Lord, that I may never flatter any in their Weaknesses or Passion: I

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am in frequent Occasions of this Sin, whilst Friendship inclines me to it: Interest and Dependance often strongly pres. it, and the Authority of those, I converse with, seems to expect it from me. These, and many other Arguments, persuade me to speak in Favour of what, in my own Conscience, I judge most unreasonable, and in Words to approve, what I condemn in my Heart. And how great, O God, is the Guilt I have contracted by this mean and unworthy Compliance, through Fear or Flattery? How many of my Neighbours Sins have I to answer for by the Encouragement I have given, where my Duty to thee, my God, obliged me to express my Dislike?

Ah, my God, what can I do here, but humble myself before thee, under the Guilt of these my numberless, and I fear unknown Sins! Forgive me, I beseech thee, and all those who have been encouraged by me in what was sinful. And now let thy Grace so strengthen me against all this Weakness, that I may never more be prevailed on, by any worldly Motives, to plead for what is unreasonable or unjust; but let me be Advocate only for Truth; and may this, O God, ever take Place. I know, by this Method, I shall lose the Favour of all such as expect to be flattered, even when they are in the Wrong; and shall be variously censured by others. But let it be so: It is much better for me to lose such Friends, than for their Friendship, to approve all they do that is unreasonable, and to concur in the Guilt of their Passions. Whatever I lose upon this Account, is for the Sake of Justice and Truth. And I have Reason rather to desire than fear such a Loss, since thou, O God, hast promised eternal Blessings to those that suffer for Justice Sake.

Grant then, most gracious Lord, that this may be my constant Rule, for the Time to come; that I may never speak in Favour of any Causse, but where, according to the best of my Judgement, I believe it to be good and just. Let Flattery no more be my Sin: Let me ever hate it, as treacherous, and be ashamed of it, as base and mean. For it is Treachery to encourage Evil,

Evil, as if it were Good. And what is a greater Argument of a mean Spirit, than to renounce what is right and just, and subscribe to the Passions and Extravagancies of every Company? I am not taught thus by thee, O God: For this is certainly a very great Weakness, thus to act against my Judgement and Conscience. But shew Mercy to thy Servant, and, by thy powerful Assistance, help me in standing against it. Behold I lay before thee both my Sins and my Desires of Amendment. Forgive my past Sins, I beseech thee, and by thy Grace so confirm my Desires, that I may never cease from my Prayers and Endeavours, till I have a better Command of my Tongue, and have overcome all its ill Habits.

But, above all, have Regard, O God, to the Petition I now make to thee, and grant that I may never offend thee, by Backbiting, Reviling, Detraction, or Speaking Evil of my Neighbour. I am often in the Occasion of this Sin, both from my own corrupt Inclination; from conversing with others; and from the Dislike of those, who are either disagreeable to me, or I apprehend to be in another Interest. And great Encouragement I have from the general Practice not only of Christians, but even of those amongst them who are the most exemplar.

But still I know all these are nothing but Temptations, and can be no Warrant for doing what is sinful. And therefore, I beseech thee, as my God and Protector, so to strengthen me by thy holy Grace, that I may be a faithful Observer of thy Law, and may permit no Custom, Authority, or Practice to carry me against it. And particularly in the Case of Detraction, which I know to be so displeasing to thee, and so very injurious to my own Soul.

Preserve me, therefore, O God, from all malicious Reflections, that I may never be prevailed on by Revenge, Passion, Animosity, or Ill-will, to publish or speak any Thing that can take away or lessen the Reputation of my Neighbour. For all that is from these evil Roots, is so much against Charity, and so expressly forbidden by the Gospel, that I cannot expect any Blessing or Grace from Heaven, nor even be in the Way to

to Happiness, as long as I follow such evil Suggestions, and lie under the Guilt of such Crimes.

Let thy Grace therefore, O God, so rule in my Heart, that I may banish thence all malicious and revengeful Inclinations, and never speak one Word in Compliance with them: And if at any Time I am surprized with Passion, yet still, O Lord, let thy Grace govern my Tongue, that I break not forth into any uncharitable Discourse, but stifle all such Motions under the strictest Silence. Be favourable to me, I beseech thee, in this Petition, because I know my Weakness; I know how forward I am in speaking, how ready to put the worst Construction on every Thing, when there is any Bitterness, Envy, or Dislike at the Root; and how rashly I am then apt to run out to my Neighbour's Disadvantage. This is my Infirmitie, and my only Help is in thee, O God. Help me therefore, I beseech thee, and for the future let both my Passions and my Words be under the Direction of thy Grace, that I offend not in either.

Instruct me likewise, O merciful Lord, in the Lesson of true Charity, that I may be watchful in avoiding, not only malicious Reflections, but likewise all such Discourses as are not agreeable to that Love which I owe my Neighbour. The Love of my Neighbour is one of the greatest Commandments, and my Salvation, I know, depends on the Observance of it. Grant therefore, O God, that as often as I come into Company, I may ever have this Commandment as a Measure, ready both in my Heart and my Hand; and that to every Discourse that is moved, I may apply this Measure, and never join in any which I find not to square with it. Hear me, O God of Mercy, in this Particular, that I may be careful in this Precept on which thou hast told me all depends.

Consider then, my Soul, and reflect on what agrees with this Measure, *Thou art to love thy Neighbour as thyself.* In all Kinds then of Discourse, relating to thy Neighbour, imagine thyself then in thy Neighbour's Place, and, supposing his Case thy own, reflect whether thou wouldst be pleased to have all that discoursed of thee behind thy Back, which is said of thy Neighbour? If thou

thou couldst not willingly consent to this, nor esteem those to be thy Friends who should do it; join not then in carrying on such a Subject; for it squares not with thy Measures, which is, to *love thy Neighbour as thyself.*

O God, thus I ought to do, and thus careful I ought to be in the Choice of my Discourse. But how far am I from doing this, who seldom consider this nice Matter; but freely entertain my Friends with such Discourse of my Neighbour as harmles, which, if others should make of me, I should not bear it with Patience! Ah, my God, I confess in this I am very inconsiderate and partial; and the Root of this is a Want of Charity; for if my Heart were possessed with a true Love of my Neighbour, I should then be as nice in my Neighbour's Reputation as my own. Grant me therefore, O God, this Charity; grant me this Love of my Neighbour; let this keep Guard upon my Tongue, that no Word pass out of my Lips, which I could not with Content hear of myself.

But consider then, what thou couldst with Patience hear of thyself. Would it be easy to thee, to hear others put the worst Construction on thy Words or Actions; to be positive in determining thy Intentions, to the less favourable Sense; to relate to others what thou hast spoken rashly or done indiscreetly; to entertain themselves with thy past Extravagancies; to recite such Passages of thy Life which thou canst not think of without Confusion, and desirest that they should lie buried in Silence? I must acknowledge, all these Subjects would be a Trouble to me: I should think those Persons had no Love or Charity for me, who helped to carry on such Discourse; I should judge the offended God in so doing.

Thus I judge when the Case is my own; nay, and when any others are concerned, for whom I have a real Love and Esteem, for of these I cannot bear such Discourse. And natural Reason informs all so unanimously in this Matter, that none who have any Degree of common Civility will move or have Part in such Discourse, when they observe any present whom they know to be real Friends to the Persons who are the

the Subject of such Entertainment. Thus I confess it is when the Case is my own, or of my Friends.

But how very different is the Case in regard of those for whom I have no particular Concern, either of Nature or Interest? Of these I speak at large, without any such Check; And though Charity lays the same Restraints as Friendship does, yet how very little do I regard it? O God, what can I say of myself in this Particular, but acknowledge my Fault, and confess, that Charity does not rule in my Heart; that though it be the greatest of all Precepts, yet I have no Care to observe it! O blessed God, renew in my Soul a right Spirit; infuse into my Heart the Spirit of Charity; let this be more powerful with me than Nature or Friendship, and impose an eternal Silence upon my Lips, as to whatever is a Transgression of this great Commandment.

Grant me, O God, a better Spirit than to delight in Corruption; give me a more Christian Temper, than to take Pleasure in keeping open my Neighbour's Wounds; grant me more generous Inclinations than to be always raking in the Mire: And no more, O God, let it be the Satisfaction of my leisure Hours, to revive the Misfortunes or Follies of my Neighbours; for if I loved them, their Misfortunes would certainly be the Subject of my Grief; and therefore, as long as I find Satisfaction either in hearing or speaking of them, it is as evident as Demonstration that I do not truly love them. And how unhappy then must the State of my Soul be, if thy holy Grace be not the Remedy of my Unhappiness?

Be merciful therefore, O God, to me a Sinner, and correct this Disorder of my Soul, this sinful Habit of my Tongue, that I may no more offend by speaking Evil of my Neighbour; that I may be as tender of his good Name as of my own. For whilst this Sin of Detraction is a Breach of Charity, where can my Comfort be, if, by the Help of thy Grace, I do not overcome it? Strengthen me therefore, I beseech thee, and refuse not the Petition of a poor Sinner, who, sensible of his great Weakness, seeks to thee for Help, and confesses there is no Help but from thee. Suffer

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not the Work of thy Hands to perish, but manifest now thy Power in me, that in the Change of my Soul I may experience that thou art my God. Grant therefore, O Lord, that I may be watchful over all my Words, that I may no more make that my Entertainment which is so very provoking, and may be the Damnation of my Soul.

Forgive me, O God of Mercy, whatever Sins I have committed of this Kind, all the Sins whereby I have either designedly or indiscreetly blemished my Neighbour's Reputation, or have been the Occasion of his being less esteemed among his Acquaintance. I am sincerely troubled within myself for having thus offended against Charity, and wish with all my Soul it were in my Power to make Reparation for whatever Injury I have done any Neighbour, by the Words I have spoken to his Prejudice. But, O God, how desperate must my Condition be if no Pardon is to be expected, except I make Restitution for the Wrong? For how shall I do this, when it is impossible to recal what is spread amongst many? I wish it were in my Power, I would willingly do it; and I will now do whatever Charity and Prudence can advise me to undertake.

This Desire of my Heart I hope thou wilt accept, O God, and mercifully supply whatever is not in my Power to do. To thee therefore I recommend all those whom I have at any Time injured by my Words; and I beseech thee, in the Abundance of heavenly Blessings, to recompence the Wrong I have done. For since Justice obliges me to Restitution, I think myself bound to do by others what I cannot do by myself; and, upon this Title of Justice, I now undertake to pray for them, and intend, for the Time to come, not to fail in begging thy Blessings upon them.

And now, for the future, give me Grace never more to have any Part in these Sins of Detraction, not only by never speaking against my Neighbour, but likewise by never giving Encouragement to others, either by asking Questions, by Words or Smiles to do it. For if I do this, I know my Guilt is the same as if I spoke myself. Grant also, O God, that I may never willingly give Ear to Detractors, or be pleased with their uncharitable

uncharitable Discourse; for this again is a Concurrence in their Sin, and I most certainly deceive myself; if, in these Circumstances I pretend to be innocent.

Rather, O most gracious Lord, give me such Resolution, and Strength of Mind, that I may discourage all Kinds of Detraction, either by reproving it; or otherwise shewing my Dislike of it; and where this cannot be, that I may chuse to withdraw from such Company, rather than stay to be Witness of their Sin, who divert themselves by being uncharitable to their Neighbours, and offending thee. I am sensible this may not please; but how shall I be faithful in thy Service, O God, if in all Things I eadeavour to please Men? O blessed God, deliver me from all such base Compliance, which considers Men more than thee, my God.

O God, who didst promise to thy Servant Moses, to be in his Mouth, and to teach him what to speak; mercifully grant this Favour to me thy Servant, that whereas I am any Ways subject to offend in Words, my Tongue, for the future, may be under the Direction of thy Grace, that I may never open my Mouth against Charity, Truth, or Justice, but speak in all Things as one taught by thee.

O God, who hast declared thy Hatred against lying Lips, against Backbiting and Whispering; mercifully deliver me from these Sins, may thy holy Grace keep my Mind ever watchful against them; and, since I make Profession of being thy Servant, suffer me not, I beseech thee, so to forget what I profess, as to make a Custom of, or please myself in such Things which thou hast declared so displeasing to thee. Ah, my God, what a Servant am I, if I have no more Respect to thy holy Will, than to make a Practice of offending thee!

O God, who by touching the Lips of *Isaiah* the Prophet with a Coal from the Altar, didst cleanse him from Sin, and purify him from all his Iniquity; look upon me, thy Servant, with the Eye of Compassion; and since thou seest me unhappily subject to many Sins, so as to have truly polluted Lips, wherewith I have often offended thee, my God, and injured my Neighbour,

bouur, let now thy Goodnes be my Remedy ; touch my Lips, I beseech thee, with a Coal from thy Altar, and let my Tongue be so purified that it may become a Sacrifice to thee. May nothing sinful any more be heard from my Mouth, but Charity and Truth so dwell upon my Lips, that I may speak nothing but what is as a sweet Savour in thy Sight.

O God, who didst inspire thy Prophets with a divine Spirit, so that being of themselves subject to many Weaknesses, they were by this directed into Truth, and taught to speak of their Neighbours Failings as Charity suggested, in order to reclaim them ; grant, I beseech thee, that my Tongue may be under the Influence of the same holy Mover, and by his divine Power be restrained from all Kinds of Untruths : May all Inclinations to Lying be checked by him, and no Word go out of my Mouth which has not a Pass from him. May I pray for all Sinners, and recommend them to thy Mercy ; but of their Sins may I be ever silent, except where Charity obliges me to speak.

O blessed Jesus, the eternal Word of the Father, and infinite unerring Truth, communicate thyself to me, though an unworthy Member of that mystical Body, of which thou art the Head : Be thou a Model to me, and let the Virtue of the Head, descending upon me, give me both Life and Motion. Especially, O Jesus, let my Tongue be subject to this divine Power : Let all my Words and Discourse be regulated by it, so as no more to offend against Charity, Justice, and Truth ; and thus may I give Proof of the Old Man being put off, and the New abiding in me.

O Jesus, who didst so restore the dumb Man to his Speech, that he spoke aright ; mercifully vouchsafe to work this Miracle in me ; that after so often offending thee in Wqrds, I may now learn to speak aright. O Jesus, what an ill Use have I made of my Tongue ; had not I better have been dumb, than thus frequently sinned against thee ? Ah, my God, how long shall I go on thus, rash, foolish, and unchristian ! Shew now thy Power in this unhappy Sinner, and deliver me from all my wonted Weakness ; teach me to go-

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vern my Tongue; teach me when to be silent, and how to speak aright.

O Jesus, who, knowing our Weakness, hast given us Directions as to our Speech, and mercifully foretold us, that every idle Word shall fall under Judgement; grant, I beseech thee, that I may be ever mindful both of thy Directions and Threats, and that, being awed by these, I may keep my Lips under the strictest Guard, so as to avoid all those Words which are displeasing to thee, and for which I am to be call'd to an Account. Must I give an Account of idle Words? What then will be the Judgement of lying, flattering, malicious, and uncharitable Discourse! O Jesus, let thy Mercy and Passion plead for me with thy eternal Father, that I may obtain Forgiveness of what is past, and be strengthened with new Grace, for effectually renouncing all my former Sins. For if I make that my daily Practice, which will increase the Severity of thy Judgement, how shall I appear before thee?

O Jesus, who by thy Apostle hast commanded thy Followers to lay aside all Evil-speaking; to be careful that no ill Word comes out of their Mouth; and hast given no Hopes of Life or good Days, but upon Condition of bridling the Tongue from Evil; vouchsafe me, I beseech thee, such Strength of Grace, that I may observe thy Commands, and perform the Conditions thou proposest. I confess, I have no Hopes but in thee; and that all my Hopes are vain, if I am careless in what thou prescribest. See then, my Soul, has not thy Lord forbidden all Evil speaking? And what dost thou think of all thy daily Sins in Words? He has forbidden them, and thou unthinkingly goest on with them. O Jesus, give me thy Grace, that I may better answ're my Character, and have more grounded Hopes for thy Mercy.

O Jesus, to whom is known all my Weakness, and the many Ways by which I offend in Word, both against God and my Neighbour; shew Mercy to me, thy Servant; for behold I now lay my Sins before thee: It is a Confusion to me, to see how easily I fall into them, and how that, after so frequent an

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Acknowledgement of my Infirmitie, I shall lie under it as if I saw it not, or did not believe it an Unhappines. O Jesus, have Compassion on me, and help me; help me in being more watchful and resolute against all my evil Customs; for while I complain of my Sins, and take so little Care to avoid them, it is too plain, I am not in earnest; and that my Complaints are only a Confession of my Guilt, but without Repentance. This shews how much I want of thy Grace; help me therefore, O blessed Redeemer, according to my Want, and now let thy Grace keep my Tongue in Subjection to thy Law. Thou hast informed me by thy Apostle, that *he, who thinks himself religious, and bridles not his Tongue, his Religion is vain.* If then an ungoverned Tongue makes void all Religion, how miserable, how wretched am I, who am yet so much wanting in so important a Point? Ah, my God! suffer me not any longer to go on thus, my Case deserves Compassion. And does it not, O Sinner, demand thy Care too? Endeavour then to be more watchful; set a better Guard upon thy Lips; let not thy Tongue have its usual Liberty; speak not all that comes to thy Mind; let thy Thoughts be examined by Prudence, and by Charity, and by Truth, and by the Will of God; and, till they have passed this Examination, let them not be made publick. Let not Passion, Humour, or Inconsiderateness govern that Member, on which Life depends. O Jesus, grant that for the future I may be thus careful, and then I need not doubt of thy Assistance; and thus alone can I expect an Amendment of those many Sins, of Lying, Vanity, Flattery, and Detraction, by which I have hitherto so often offended thee.

P A T I E N C E .

I COME this Day to ask of thee, my God; the Virtue and divine Gift of Patience, which is so necessary to carry me through the Troubles of this World, the Difficulties of my Charge, and to satisfy the many Duties which are enjoined me by thy Command. I confess to thee my great Weaknes in this Point; there being

being not any Day which does not convince me how much I want what I now come to ask; and therefore I beg of thee, my God, that Grace, that according to my Necessity, so my Heart may be raised to thee, and be so earnest in asking, as to prevail for the Grant of what is the Subject of my present Petition.

O God, I beseech thee, turn with Compassion towards thy Servant, and consider my Necessities. Thou knowest how often I offend thee every Day by Impatience: Thou knowest how great a Hindrance this is to me, in all that belongs to my Soul; how it makes me unfit for every Duty; into how many Snares I am drawn by it; how many rash and unreasonable Things I both say and do by its Suggestion; and how many Scandals I give through my Passion: These are some of the ill Effects of my Impatience, though I fear I see not the Half Part of them; but they are all known to thee, my God; and therefore thou knowest my Necessities to be such as deserve Compassion; such as, if not remedied, must draw me into thy greater Displeasure, and be the daily Occasion of encreasing the Number of my Sins against thee.

Help me therefore, I beseech thee, O God of Mercy; and since thou hast been pleased to give me some Sense of my Weakness, give me likewise Grace to overcome it: I know, however weak I am, yet thy Grace is sufficient for me, and that if thou dost but say the Word my Soul shall be healed. Speak therefore to my Soul, O Lord, and command new Strength and Steadiness to be communicated to it, that I may not so easily be moved; so easily fall into Disturbance, and lose both my Reason and my Peace. Give me Grace, at least, that while I complain of this my Misfortune, I may in earnest strive against it, and labour, by my best Endeavours, to prevent all its usual ill Effects returning upon me.

I confess thou hast furnished me with Motives sufficient for obliging me to be very solicitous in this Affair, and not to omit any Thing I can do, for bringing myself to a better Temper. For while I believe and acknowledge, there is nothing does or can happen to me but by thy Appointment or Permission, and whatever

whatever Part any Creatures have in my Trouble, that they are no more than Instrument in thy Hand, and all act as subordinate to thee, the supreme and sovereign Governor of the Universe ; this obliges me to a peaceable Submission ; since I am bound to confess, that whatever comes from thy Hand is most just, most holy, and most adorable, and that it is the indispensable Duty and only Wisdom of such poor Creatures as I am to bow down under thy Orders, and with Cheerfulness own, that as it is their Happiness to be under thy Care, so it ought to be their daily Comfort ; that nothing can be better for them, than what is the Effect of that infinite Wisdom and all-seeing Providence with which thou governest.

Thus it ought to be with me, O God ; and yet as often as Trouble falls upon me, how do I forget all this, and open my Breast to Disquiets, as if I were no Part of thy Care, or thou hadst no Concern in what happens to me ? O blessed God, suffer not, I beseech thee, my Faith to be so easily oppressed by Troubles ; but grant that the Belief of thy Providence and of my Subjection to thee, may keep my Soul in a lasting Peace ; grant that I may always approve and think that best for me which thou appointest ; and that the Shame of a Creature uneasy, and excepting rebelliously against the Orders of infinite Wisdom and his God, may stifle in me all Inclinations to Disquiet, and preserve me at all Times in the Calm of a peaceable Submission.

I know again, that nothing of Trouble can happen to me, but still more than this is due to my Sins ; and that if I were to suffer as my Sins deserve, I should rejoice in that as a great Mercy, which now is made the Occasion of my Complaints. Grant therefore, O God, whatever happens uneasy or afflicting to me, and from whatever Hand it comes, I may consider it as the Punishment due to my Offences, and accept it as the Penance enjoined me by thy Justice. Thus, O God, as often as any Thing afflicts me, let it be my constant Practice to lift up my Eyes and Heart immediately to Heaven, and look upon it as the Execution of that Sentence which thou hast pronounced against me

me, in Punishment of my Iniquities: And, upon this, let it be my Practice again, to bow down with all Humility, and say, *Thou art just, Lord, in all thy Ways:* *It is just the Offender should be punished:* Submit therefore to the Sentence of thy Lord, and complain not; for it is all from thy own Sins.

O God, what an Advantage might I make of all my Troubles, could I thus submit to them as to the Punishment my Sins deserve! and how great a Loser am I now, whilst by my Impatience I offend, and make new Additions to my Sins? This is great Indiscipline, and vile ill Management, to be there a Loser when I have in my Hands the Opportunity of so great a Gain. Wherefore I beseech thee, most gracious Lord, that the Memory of past Sins, and the great Hazard of Eternity, may make me desirous of finding Means for cancelling this Debt, and being again reconciled to thy Favour; and for this End, that I may be willing to embrace all Occasions of Suffering, and labour to suffer with Patience, since there is nothing can be more effectual for making my Peace with thee.

I know likewise, that thou art pleased, O God, to exercise thy best Servants with many Trials; and that so thou hast ordered it, the Way to Heaven is through many Tribulations: Thus is their Fidelity tried; thus are they improved in Humility and Patience, brought to a greater Contempt of the World, and raised to a more earnest Desire of Heaven. Now, if this good Use of Troubles be such an effectual Help towards Heaven, have not I in this a great Motive to be patient under them? For who is there solicitous to go to any Place, that grieves at a fair Opportunity which offers, for being helped forward in his Way? Or who earnestly desiring any Thing does not lay hold, with Satisfaction, on whatever happens that may be very helpful in obtaining what is desired? And is not Heaven the Place I pretend to? Is not the Possession of God what I most earnestly desire to obtain? And what then art thou to do, my Soul, when Troubles happen to thee? Dost not thou see, that to bear them with Submission, Humility, and Patience, is the most certain Way to the Possession of Heaven and thy God; and that

that it is the Path trodden by those vast Numbers who are now in Bliss? What is it then to grieve and be impatient under them, but to contradict all thy Pretensions to a future State? It is to think thyself unhappy, for being put in the Way to the Place where thou sayest thy Desire is to be. And is not this to act both against Reason and Faith? Consider it then, and for the future endeavour to do more like a Christian. If thou hast any Interest in Heaven, and desirest to be there, do not think thyself injured when thou art put in the Way to it. And when thou hast fair Opportunities for advancing strongly forward, make the best Use of them, with the Direction and Comfort of Faith; and do not play the Infidel or Madman, turning them all against thyself, so as to set thee backward, or put thee quite out of the Way.

Thus I can reason, but it is thou, O' God, must help me in the Practice. Thou seest how little a Thing cast me down, and so darkens my clearest Reasoning, that being under any Trouble, I discern nothing of that Way which at other Times lies so plain before me. Let it be therefore the Effect of thy holy Grace to support my Soul in Time of Trouble, that I yield not then to Impatience, to Vexation, Melancholy, or Passion; but that, assisted by thy heavenly Light, I may consider what is the best Use I can make of my Affliction, and how to turn it to the Service of Eternity. Let it then be my Endeavour to humble myself under thy Hand, since I stand so much in need of being humbled; and I know there is nothing can more recommend me to thy Favour than Humility. Let me then reflect upon the great Advantage thy Servants have made of their Afflictions, and how, by Patience and Resignation, they have increased the Glory of their Crowns; and by the same Methods may labour to secure my own Eternity.

I know again, that Christ, my Redeemer, being true God, and having all Things in his Power, chose the Way of the Cross, even so far that his whole Life was a Cross and Martyrdom, and after all Kinds of Afflictions, he at length died a Sacrifice under all the Violence of Envy, Hatred, Malice, and Contempt. I know

know he calls all his Followers to take up their Cross and follow him. I know he appointed his Apostles to very severe Suffering, and chose other his most faithful Servants to the Fellowship of the Cross. I know he foretold Trials and Persecutions to his Followers; that they should mourn here, while the World rejoiced, and promised the Blessing of eternal Happiness should be the Fruit of their Suffering.

And is not this enough to preserve Peace in my Soul when Affliction comes, and I find the Cross on my Shoulders? Though it be uneasy to Nature to go under the Weight; yet what greater Comfort for a Christian, than thus to be associated to Christ, his Redeemer; to his Apostles and Martyrs; and to be in the Way to that Glory which is promised to those who take Part in bearing the Cross? There is certainly Matter enough for Comfort to such as know their great Businels in this World is to secure the next: For though these have many Things to desire in this World, yet their great Concern, above all others, is to be in the safest Way to eternal Rest. Hence they find more Satisfaction under the Weight of their Cross, than in all the Charms of a worldly Peace; because, being raised by Faith above Nature, they judge not of Things by Sense, or by any Agreeableness to their present State; but by the Advantage they have with Regard to Eternity.

O God, I beseech thee, that I may find my Faith thus active in me, as often as I fall under any Trouble. May I then submit to it, as to a Part of my Redeemer's Cross, which he has commanded me to take up and follow him. For I know, in whatever thou orderest or permittest, there is a Manifestation of thy Will, such as to me is equal to thy Command. Let me therefore, in every Trouble, consider my Saviour's Cross, and look upon myself commanded by thee to take it up. Suffer me not to throw it off my Shoulders by any Impatience, but to go on under it in the Spirit of my blessed Redeemer, in the Spirit of Obedience, in the Spirit of Humility, and entire Submission to thy holy Will. Let me then find Comfort in being united to him, and

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being taken into the Fellowship of the Cross; and, without considering Nature, let me resolve to make that my Joy which is the Ordinance of thy Will, is sanctified in Christ, and raises such poor Worms as I am to the Participation of his Glory.

Having so many Motives to accept and bear with Patience whatever Troubles come to my Portion in this Life, I make it my earnest Petition to thee, that the due Consideration of them may give a Check to all my inward Disturbances, and, through thy Grace, be a Means to prevent my falling into any sinful Impatience. And, in the first Place, I beseech thee, O God, I may never more fall into Passion; but that, by thy Blessing upon my good Endeavours, I may come to that Temper, as to command all Motions that incline me to Anger. I am sensible how great a Blemish this Evil is to me, since it betrays a more than ordinary Weakness to be so easily disturbed; and shews my Reason not to be solid, which is so alarmed upon Trifles, and so often loses itself; besides the much greater Mischiefs, in being injurious to all my spiritual Concerns: Wherefore I beseech thy infinite Goodness to calm all this Disturbance in me, and to give me such a Christian Spirit, that I may bear all Kinds of Evils with Patience, and endeavour to remedy them with Moderation.

Another Petition I make to thee, O God, that by thy Grace I may overcome all that Fretfulness, and inward Uneasiness to which I am subject. I easily perceive all this proceeds from a Want of Patience, a Want of Humility, or Meekness and Submission; and this being a Want of that Spirit which the Gospel prescribes, and belongs to my Profession, I cannot but be ashamed within myself, to see how little I have of that Character which I profess: Wherefore, O God, I most earnestly beseech thee to charge this my unhappy Temper, and assist me every Day with thy Grace, that I may labour in overcoming myself, and mastering this ill-Custom to which I am subject. Give me Strength to deny myself, and to stand against all Inclinations to Disturbance, as against Temptations which lead me out of the Way of the Gospel. Give me Grace

Grace then to calm all my Uneasiness, by calling to Mind the Rules of my Profession, and by forcing Nature to bend to them ; and let me never desist from my Endeavours, till I have obtained so far upon myself, as to find that I can fit enjoying the Comforts of inward Peace under such Provocation as hitherto have been enough to put me into Disorder.

My Necessities, O God, oblige me still again to renew my Petitions to thee, and that is, that thou wouldest vouchsafe to confirm my Mind with such Patience, that I be not easily provoked by the Words or Actions of my Neighbours. In this I find a great Weakness ; so that while I seem to be in the greatest Peace, a cross Word, an ordinary Contradiction, ill Humour, or the least Sign of Contempt, is enough to raise a Storm, and change all my Peace into Confusion. This, O God, I confess is a great Fault, being contrary to all the Rules of the Gospel ; to its Charity, to its Humility, to its Meekness, to its Patience, and to its Peace. And when I consider it, I cannot but be troubled to see how unlike I am in this to my blessed Redeemer, who having taught me, by his Example, to bear the greatest Contradictions in a silent Patience, I have not yet learned to bear the least without Impatience, and too often Clamour.

How long, O God, how long shall I thus go on; pretending to be Christ's Disciple, and practising so little of what he teaches ! Help me, I beseech thee, under this Weakness, and teach me by thy Grace to live more by the Spirit of the Gospel. Help me to suppress all Anger ; give me Strength to overcome it ; and if at any Time I am surprised by it, then, O merciful God, shew thy Goodness to thy Servant, and teach me to govern my Lips, that I express no Passion in Words, nor give any Disturbance. I know it is my Duty to be ready to suffer all Extremities, and even Death itself, rather than offend thee ; but how little am I prepared for this, who cannot bear the least Provocation without Resentment and Passion, and have not Patience for the most common Trials.

Help me, O God, under this Infirmitie, and convince my Soul, how unbecoming and infamous all

Impatience is to a Professor of the Gospel ; and what Glory there is in suffering with Patience. Let this Impression sink deep into my Soul, and be so accompanied with thy Grace, that for the future I may never be disturbed at any Provocations, but rather find Comfort in them ; since it is not the Suffering, but only the Impatience under them, can do me Harm. O my Soul, when wilt thou come to understand this Lesson, and see where thy Interest lies ? Thou often complainest of thy Neighbours, as if they were injurious to thee ; when it is not they, but thou dost thyself the Harm. They furnish thee with Matter of Victory, and thou wouldest certainly triumph in Presence of thy God, didst thou but manage it with Discretion ; but for want of this thou shewest a mean Spirit, and like a Slave are basely overcome ; and then complainest of them, when the whole Fault in this is not theirs, but mine. Ah, my God, I own the Fault is mine, and now, like an humble Slave, cast myself prostrate before thee, confessing my Weakness, and that all my Dependance is on thee. I have been many Years this unhappy Slave, and knowing there is no Power but thine can rescue me from this Subjection, I earnestly implore thy Help.

Have Compassion therefore on me, and grant me that true Discretion, that for the future, under all Kinds of Provocations, I may manage so as not to be injurious to myself, nor be a Loser by them. For this End, I most earnestly beseech thee to preserve me, in all such Occasions, from sudden Passion and Impatience ; and give me Grace to check these Motions, if they begin to disturb my Breast. Then, O God, let me be afraid of myself more than of what others have said or done to me. Let this Fear put a Guard upon my Lips ; and, in Silence, let all my Thoughts be taken up, in considering the great Advantage of patient Suffering, the *Command* of forgiving Injuries, and the *Blessing* of returning Good for Evil. Under this Consideration, I beg of thee, O God, to make me fearful of losing the present Opportunity, and desirous of gaining thy Favour, in the present Occasion that is offered : With this Desire let a steady Composure

Composure of Mind succeed ; and thus may I stand under all Provocations, rejoicing and even triumphing within myself, while in the Eye of the World I seem to suffer, and lie under Reproach.

I am very sensible, O God, how much better and wiser this would be, than to go on in my usual Weakness, of betraying my Impatience, of taking nothing quietly, of breaking forth into Passion, of filling all with Dissention, Noise, and Disturbance ; and then to have a second Fretting when, upon cooling, I reflect how foolish I have been in losing my Peace, and acting like an Unbeliever, and not as a Christian. This now I am sensible of ; but it is thou, O God, who must help me in the Practice : Shew then thy Mercy to me, and strengthen me with such Grace, that I may no more be surprized and blinded with the Heat of Passion, but rather bear all Things with Patience, and learn, in this one Point, to be wise where it turns to so good an Account, and I have so frequent Occasions for it.

¶ II. I have still another Petition to address to thee, O God, for the Remedy of another Weakness ; and it is, that I may be patient under Reproofs, and not fall into Passion or Discouragement, when I am reprehended. In this Particular I have great Complaints to make against myself, because I see how little and inconsiderable a Word is enough to disturb all my Quiet, and put me into great Disorder ; so that I seldom fail either of fretting like an Unbeliever, or of being quite dejected in Mind ; as if upon a Reproof, there were no Place left for Comfort. And what must be at the Root of this but some intolerable Pride, which cannot bear a Contradiction ; or a strange Impatience, which cannot submit to any Trial ?

This is an Unhappiness which requires thy Help, O God, for my Cure ; and it being attended with so many Inconveniences which are all known to thee, it must necessarily move thee to have Compassion on my Desires. See then, O God, my Weakness ; and it being such, in which I have no Delight, but is much more the Occasion of my Trouble, shew thyself a God of Mercy to me, and help me. Infuse into my

Soul thy Grace, by which my Heart may be better established than to be thus easily put into Disorder. Teach me, I beseech thee, to be a Christian, that I may learn to receive Contradictions with such a Spirit as the Gospel requires, that is, with Meekness and Patience: For how am I a Follower of my Redeemer, if, upon such ordinary Trials, I act quite contrary both to his Doctrine and Example! O God, thou seest what an unhappy Temper this is, and what a Confusion it must be to me to find, that after so many Resolutions and Protestations of being faithful to thee, I so easily forget all, and let every trifling Occasion put me into that Disturbance, as if Peace and Patience were not Things belonging to my Profession.

Teach me, I beseech thee, to have a greater Value for these necessary Ingredients of a Christian Life, and to be more solicitous in preserving them. I am convinced enough of my Dependance on them; that without them I can perform no one Duty well, but fall into many Sins; and yet, O God, upon what little Occasions do I lose both my Peace and Patience! Ah, my Lord, when wilt thou change this unhappy Mass, and deliver me from this Weakness? When shall I begin to be the Soldier of Jesus Christ; to stand my Ground in Time of Battle; to let Patience be my Defence, and to overcome by Suffering? This is what I am taught; this is what I profess; but when is it I do thus? Help me, O merciful God, and give me the Patience which belongs to my Character; that, bearing all Contradictions as thou prescribest, I may be in Hopes of that Crown which thou hast promised.

Another Weakness, O Lord, obliges me to make still another Petition to thee; and it is, that I may then have Patience when I apprehend myself affronted, exposed to Reproach, Suspicions, Shame, or false Accusations. In these Cases, I beseech thee, to grant me such Constancy of Mind, that I be not disordered with Passion, nor fall into any Dejection, nor disquiet myself with vain Imaginations of what the World will say. Nature pushes me on strongly into these crooked Ways, and I find great Inclinations to take them, backed

backed with Variety of pressing Reasons; but I see the Corruption of such Ways, and the Vanity of all those Arguments which appear so plausible. I see they are all in Favour of Impatience, of unjust Self-love, and Pride; and therefore now most humbly solicit thy heavenly Majesty for granting me such Humility, such Patience, and Courage, that I may look upon these Exercises as Trifles, and learn to stand unconcerned amidst them.

I am sensible it is very just it should be so: For, when I look upon myself, and see how great a Sinner I am, I presently perceive so much Unworthiness, Ingratitude, and Folly in myself, that I cannot but own it is just I should be despised, that I should be had in Contempt, and that all should have an ill Opinion of me. And why then, my Soul, dost thou so much disturb thyself when thou art under these Trials? Thou hast much more Reason to be pleased that Justice is done; that Self-love and Pride, thy greatest Enemies, meet with this Contradiction, and are beaten down; that Humility is exercised; that thou hast an Opportunity of suffering something for thy Sins, and art put in the Way of the Cross.

I own all this, O my God, and here confess, there is no Kind of Affront, Contempt, or Reproach so great, but I deserve still more; and therefore have no Reason to complain, but to rejoice, whenever I am thus humbled, and am set in the Rank which I deserve. But still thou seest how weak I am, and that instead of Joy, under these Provocations, I am filled with the Confusion of a working and restless Pride, and can have no Peace with those whom thou hast employed or permitted to be the Ministers of thy Justice, in humbling me, though much less than is my Due. This unhappy Sinner am I, under the Government of Pride, while I pretend to serve and obey thee, my God. But have Mercy on me, I beseech thee, and forgive this my Iniquity: For behold I acknowledge here the Injustice of it, and see it so unreasonable, that I wish with all my Heart I might never more fall under its Guilt. Let not then thy Grace, O God, be wanting to me; but as I here own before

thee the Justice of whatever Contempts can fall upon me, so I beseech thee to strengthen me under them; that even then I may reflect how just they are; that I may suppress all Passion and Disquiet, give a Check to all Resentments, stop all Enquiry after the Authors, charge nothing upon Malice, but all upon my own Sins; and in that Sense of Justice sit still, rejoicing in being humbled, and praising thy holy Name, who art willing to receive such a Sacrifice from me, an unworthy Sinner.

Besides these Particulars, I beseech thee, O God, to remember me in all other Troubles, whether of Pain, Sicknes, Losses, Misfortunes, Distress, Oppression, Death of Friends, or other difficult Circumstances: Whatever of these come to my Portion, I earnestly make it my Petition, that I may be assisted by thy heavenly Grace, and by this divine Help be enabled to resist Nature, and resolutely stand against all Inclinations, either to Passion, Melancholy, or Impatience. Teach me then to suffer like a Christian, and permit me not to offend thee by any Uneasiness, when I have greatest Reason to engage thy Goodness to my Relief. For this End I beg of thee, O merciful Father, as often as I fall under any Affliction, that I may forthwith humble myself under thy Hand, and by hearty Contrition seek to make my Peace with thee; that so, if my Trouble be the Punishment of Sin, the Scourge may be thus removed; and if it be designed for my Exercise, I may be prepared by thy Grace to bear it, and improve under it, according to the Design of thy Providence.

May I then raise up my Eyes and Heart to thee, and, seeing all Things to be according to thy blessed Will, bow down under it, with an entire Surrender of my Will to thine. Upon this Submission, give me Grace, O God, to dissipate all uneasy and murmuring Thoughts, to smother all Complaints, and to bear with Patience whatever Weight I cannot remove. Then, O God, let me have a full Sight of my own Unworthiness, and learn from hence to adore thy Justice in the Punishment of a Sinner. Let me have a Prospect of that Happiness which thou hast promised to those that mourn;

mourn; and, upon the Terms of this Promise, bear every Affliction with Comfort. Then may I put myself wholly into thy Hands, to lead me through whatever Ways thou pleaseit, to do with me as thou thinkest good, to afflict me or deliver me, to add still more Weight to my Burthen, or give me Ease; placing my whole Satisfaction in this one Point, that thou knowest what is best for me. In this Manner, O blessed God, may I bear all Troubles, and shew myself a Christian in Affliction, as much as in Time of Peace, that so I may find the Benefit, and thy holy Name be glorified in all my Trials.

O God, who wast pleased to exercise thy Servant *Job* with the Loss of all his worldly Goods, of his Health, Children, and of whatever else was dear to him; so that, of the happiest, he became the most miserable of Men: And yet, amidst these rigorous Trials, didst so support him with thy heavenly Grace, that he bore all with Patience, and under all his Oppression still blessed thy holy Name; grant, I beseech thee, I may be so assisted by thy Grace, under all Troubles, that in whatever Way I suffer it may be still with the Patience of this thy Servant; grant that in the evil Day I may be mindful of the manifold Blessings received from thy Hand; and that, having had these multiplied upon me, I may not think myself miserable in their Loss, for having been more happy than others. Rather, O God, as I rejoice in what thou givest, so let me be content in what thou takest away, and equally give Glory to thy Name in both.

O God, who having chosen *David* out of all *Israel*, and commanded him to be anointed King over the People, didst afterwards visit him with the severest Trials, in being persecuted as a Malefactor, by those to whom he had done the greatest Service; in the Want of Necessaries; in being forced from his House; in being obliged to seek Shelter amongst his Enemies, and exposed to the greatest Dangers; and didst still so support his Soul, that he suffered all with a wonderful Patience; neither murmuring at his hard Fate, nor seeking Relief by any undue Means: Grant, I beseech thee, that I may learn, by his Example, to

go through all Difficulties; and that, whenever thou shalt visit me with any Part of his Exercise, I may rest with an entire Confidence in thee, ever resigned to thy blessed Will, and satisfied with whatever Portion thy Providence has appointed for me. Let thy Grace then direct me in all my Ways; that I yield not to the Inclinations of my own weak Nature, either in sinking under my Burthen, or by any unwarrantable Means endeavouring my Deliverance; but that I wait with Patience upon the Orders of thy Providence; having this one Solitude alone, of complying with thy holy Will, and following where thou directest.

O God, who didst often afflict thy People for their Sins, and upon turning to thee in their Affliction, in the Humiliations of Fasting, Prayer, and Repentance, didst often shew thyself their Deliverer; grant, I beseech thee, that as often as I find thy Hand upon me in any Affliction, I may immediately turn to thee; and, in the Endeavours of a sincere Repentance, be solicitous to seek thy Help. Suffer me not then unprofitably to grieve, or indiscreetly to torment myself; for this I know is all going out of the Way, and wasting my Spirits in vain; but, giving a Check to these Inclinations, may my whole Care be to grieve and sigh for my Sins. Thou hast given me sufficient Proof how much this prevails for obtaining Relief: What therefore should I do when I am miserable, but take the most effectual Way for Help; and where is this but in thee, O God?

O God, who hast shewed us, in *Saul*, the sad Effects of Impatience and Passion; since, not bearing his Troubles with Submission, nor resting on thee in the Day of Affliction with that Confidence as he ought, we find an evil Spirit came upon him, and with Violence pushed him on to the greatest Extravagancies, so that he had no Regard to Innocence, trampled upon Justice, and was not awed by the known Will of God; mercifully give Ear to my Petition, and deliver me from all Passion and Impatience; for behold, I confess here, I am sensible of the ill Effects of them; how they blind our Reason, and darken our Faith,
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and lay open our Hearts so much to evil Spirits, that under this Disorder, we are in Danger of all that is unreasonable and unjust. Wherefore I beseech thee, O God, to let thy Grace secure me against these Evils, that under all Troubles or Provocations I may be careful so to moderate both my Grief and Impatience, that they never usurp upon my Reason, but be ever kept in Subjection to it. Grant, O most gracious Lord, this my Request, because inward Peace is the great Comfort of my Soul, and Reason and Faith are the only Lights which thou hast ordained for my Government. And how unhappy must I be if the Tyranny of Grief or Passion destroy my Peace, and raise so much Confusion as to eclipse the Lights which are to guide me! Have Mercy therefore on thy Servant, and give me that Command of all my Passions, that I may never more fall under this Unhappiness, but by Patience may preserve my Peace, and have the clear Guidance of those Lights which thou hast given me.

O God, who wast pleased to visit thy Servant *Toby* with Blindness, even at a Time when all his Business was in the best Offices of Charity; and in this Affliction didst give him such Patience, as to bear it with an entire Submission to thy holy Will, and to seek no other Comfort but in thee; grant, O God, that with a like Patience I may go through all Troubles of this Life; and if I am brought into Difficulties or Distress by doing Good to others, let not this be any Discouragement to me; but then, O God, so raise up my Soul, that I may have Comfort in submitting to thy Will, and even rejoice in whatever I suffer in so good a Cause.

O blessed Jesus, who didst declare to thy Apostles, that they should meet with great Opposition in their Labours; but that he that persevered to the End should be saved; mercifully grant, that as often as I meet with Opposition I may bear it with Patience, remembering this to be a Part of the Apostles Portion, and make it my only Care to persevere to the End, that so I may be saved.

O Jesus, who didst declare to thy Apostles, that they should be hated by all Men, but that he that persevered

persevered to the End should be saved; grant, that as often as I apprehend myself the Object of others Hatred or Dislike, I may bear it with Patience, remembering this to be a Part of the Apostles Portion, and make it my only Care to persevere to the End, that so I may be saved.

O Jesus, who didst declare to thy Apostles, that Men would say all Manner of Evil against them, revile them, and accuse them falsely; grant, as often as any shall speak Evil against me, revile me, or accuse me falsely, that I bear it with Patience, remembering this to be a Part of the Apostles Portion, and make it my only Care to persevere to the End, that so I may be saved.

O Jesus, who didst declare to thy Apostles, that they should be persecuted by their Kindred and nearest Relations; be brought before Governors and Kings, and not only be put to Death, but that such as killed them should think they did God Service; but that he who persevered to the End should be saved; grant, that as often as I shall suffer any Wrong, whether from Kindred or Strangers; as often as I shall be injured, oppressed or persecuted, either by Malice, false Zeal, or Mistake, I may bear it with Patience; remembering this to be a Part of the Apostles Portion; and instead of complaining, make it my only Care to persevere to the End, that so I may be saved.

O Jesus, who being Lord of the Universe, and having all Creatures at thy Command, didst nevertheless choose a Life of Suffering, a Life of the Cross, a Life of Martyrdom; so far, that there was no Sort of Affliction, Persecution, or Cruelty, in which thou wast not exercised; vouchsafe, I beseech thee, that as often as any Trouble gives me Disquiet, I may raise my Heart to thee, and consider the fair Occasion I have of being united to thee. Grant I may not only be patient, but even rejoice, in being called to take Part in that Life, which has some Resemblance to thine; and that I may go under every Weight that oppresses me, as under that Part of thy Cross which thou hast given me to carry: But then, O Jesus, let it be with the Spirit of the Cross. O Jesus, who after many Tribulations didst ascend from the Humility of

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the Cross to the Glory of Heaven ; didst command thy Disciples to follow thee, and encourage them in their Sufferings, with the Promise of eternal Blessings : Grant, I beseech thee, that, whenever Troubles fall upon me, I may not then yield to Nature, nor give Attention to the Complaints of Flesh and Blood; but that remembering myself to be in the Way, which thou hast sanctified, which thou hast chosen for thy most faithful Servants, as the surest Way to an eternal Crown, I may go on in this Hope, and even there find the Comfort of Faith, where Nature sees no Motives but of Grief and Despair.

O Jesu, who seest all my Weakness, and, when Trouble comes, how unlike I am to a Disciple : Mercifully now hear my Prayer, and give me a better Spirit; that, as often as any Occasion of Disquiet happens, I may resolutely withstand all Inclinations to Impatience, and labour so to compose my Mind, that I may peaceably submit to all Difficulties, and only be solicitous for this one Thing, *How to suffer as a Disciple of Jesus.* Behold, my Redeemer, I lay open my Desires before thee : Thou knowest how uneasy it is to me, to see myself so subject to Impatience, and that, upon such trifling Occasions, I break into a Storm. Thou knowest likewise, what a Blessing I should esteem it, could I keep my Soul more composed, and in a calm Submission wait upon thy holy Will, in all that happens to afflict me. Wherefore I beseech thee to grant my Request, and to let thy Grace be the Remedy of all my Weakness. How long, O Lord, how long shall I thus go on with the Impatience of an Unbeliever, and still making Profession of being thy Disciple!

In Time of present Trouble.

THOU hast promised, O God, to hear those who call upon thee in Time of Trouble, and to be their Helper: Have Regard therefore, I beseech thee, to me thy unworthy Servant, in a Day wherein my Soul is disturbed, and stands in need both of thy Comfort and Help. Thou seest what my Trouble is, and how

how great is my Danger from my own Weakness; have Compassion therefore, and, according to my necessities, so shew thyself a God, a Father, and a Helper to me.

What I principally ask of thee is, that I may not offend thee, in this my Trouble; but that I may bear it with Patience, and with that true Submission as becomes a Disciple of Jesus Christ.

For what is all my Profession of following the Gospel, if now, when I am called to the Trial, I take no Care to practise what it teaches, but depart from all its Rules, as if I were an Unbeliever?

And to what End have I so often prayed, that thy Will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven; if now, when I see what thy Will is, I am so far from approving it, that in my Disturbance, Impatience, and Complaints, there is too great Evidence of my rebelling against it?

Look therefore with the Eye of Pity upon me; and, as thou art pleased to call me to this Exercise; so I beseech thy infinite Goodness to prepare me for it.

Give me Grace, O Lord, to moderate both my Grief and Passion; that I neither sink under any Degree of sinful Dejection, nor be carried away with any Violence.

Nature is disturbed, and inclines to both Extremes; but, as thou art Lord of all, so I beseech thee now so to manifest thy Power, that all that is within me, may own its Subjection to thee, and obey thy Will.

Let not Nature prevail, where thy infinite Power is called in to govern it; but now, having a poor Creature imploring thy Assistance against it, shew thyself to be my God.

§. II. Behold then the Disturbance of my Soul, see all the various Workings of my uneasy Mind; and by the Power of thy Grace compose this Storm.

Put a Stop to all my roving Thoughts, and let not my Spirits waste themselves in vain Imaginations or impudent Amusements; for these serve only to delude, and too often with Danger of Sin, but cannot cure.

Take

Take from me all Vexation, Fretfulness, and Impatience; and let no Bitterness, Melancholy, or restless Solicitude distract my Mind.

Mercifully prevent in me all Degrees of Distrust; and never permit me to give Scandal, by passionate or rash Expressions.

Quiet my Reasoning and suffer me not, by my false Constructions, to do Wrong to Innocence or Justice, or to reason against all Reason.

Thus, O God, compose both my inward and outward Man; and deliver me, in this Trouble, from all that is sinful.

Let me not seek Relief from any Thing that is displeasing to thee; but rather choose to suffer all Extremities, than admit of any Help which is not according to thy Law.

Let my only Comfort be in thee: And now, O God, raise up my Heart to thy Seat of Mercy, that from thence I may wait for Help.

And this Help, let it be such, O God, as thou knowest best for me.

For behold, my Lord, I desire to give myself wholly into thy Hands; because thou art my God, and forsakest none that trust in thee.

May this Thought be always in my Mind, that I am in thy Care; that whatever I suffer is not the Effect of Chance, but according to thy blessed Will.

That as the Sparrows fall not to the Ground without thee, and as the Hairs of my Head are numbered before thee; so nothing can touch me, or come to my Portion unknown to thee; but all must be according to thy Appointment.

And what greater Comfort can I have, than to be thus in the Hands of God, whose Wisdom and Goodness are infinite and cannot propose any Thing but what is for my Good: Whose bitterest Portions have a Mixture of the greatest Mercy, and who even then heals, when he seems to strike?

§. III. Having this Assurance, behold, O my God, I desire to rest in thee; desire nothing more, but that thy holy Will be accomplished in me.

Do

Do with me therefore, Lord, as thou wilst. Thy Will is holy, mine is corrupt and blind; what then have I to do, but to fear and renounce my own; to approve, adore, and follow thine?

This being my Duty, behold, I here bow down in Submission to thy blessed Will, and I desire all that is within me may bend before thee.

I accept of all thou dost, and question nothing; for though there be something afflicting to Nature, yet this is no Exception against thy Appointments.

Are not my Sins many, and have not I ungratefully offended thee, in the Abuse of thy greatest Blessings? And if now thy Hand be upon me, have not I Reason to submit to thy Justice?

Is this any more than I have provoked upon my own Head? And if I draw Judgements upon myself, have I Reason to complain?

Is there not rather Motive to rejoice, for that thou sufferest me not to go on unpunished in my Sins; but givest me this Disturbance, to awaken my unthinking and stupid Soul?

Is there not a Mixture of Mercy with thy Justice, whilst thou thus convincest me of the Uncertainty of this World, and of all that is in it?

Whilst tasting of its Gall, thou givest me a Disrelish of it, and effectually teachest me, there is no true Happiness in all whatever it offers?

Whilst thus thou callest upon me, to raise up my Desires to Heaven, and to seek such Comforts there as cannot fail?

Is not this a Mercy in a bewitching World, where so many go on undisturbed in their Follies, never thinking to provide for a future State, till the Terror of Death approaching puts them in mind of it, and at the same Time tells them it is too late?

§. IV. Is it not a Mercy, that amidst such Excesses of Pride, thou thus givest me Occasion of being humbled, and of knowing myself; that, by this present Trouble, thou convincest me of my manifold Weakness, and shewest me, what, for the future, I have to labour for, and what to ask?

Why

Why then dost thou complain, my Soul, and sink, as if there were no Place for Comfort; when all Accounts being made up, the Mercy of God abounds in the midst of thy Affliction, and obliges thee to give Thanks?

Be careful then, what thou dost; and see thou go not on like an Unbeliever. If God and Heaven be nothing to thee, grieve and murmur on as thou wilt; thy Unhappiness is not then from what afflicts thee, but from thy Unbelief.

But if God be in thy Creed, and from thy Heart thou believest in him, act not as a Heathen; but let Faith govern thee, more than the Sense of what is present.

If then Nature grieves for what is afflicting to Nature; let Faith be comforted, and rejoice in the Advantages of a future State.

In thy present Trial, there is Matter to exercise both Nature and Faith. But consider, in a Christian which ought to over-rule.

Thou art no longer a Christian than thou art governed by Faith. If then thou castest off all Thoughts of Comfort, where thou hast Offers of advancing thy eternal Interest, is it not too plain, that Nature has the Command of thee, and not Faith?

Do better then, and now from this Moment let all thy inward Motions depend upon thy eternal Concern, and there learn to rejoice, where there are Hopes of this going well.

And is it not so at present, where the very Thing, that is the Subject of thy Complaint, is attended with many Mercies; such as require only thy Management to become so many Steps to Heaven?

In being accepted as the Punishment due to thy past Offences; as the Exercise of thy Humility and Patience; as the Motive of bending thy Soul to God; of knowing the World, and despising its deceitful Goods; of seeking God with Sincerity, and desiring to come to the Possession of him.

How great Advantages are these to Eternity! If then this be thy Business, see whether thou hast not more Reason to be comforted, than to complain, if thy Reason be governed by Faith?

§. V. Thus

§. V. Thus certainly it is: But, O God, thou seest my Weakness to be such, that instead of making any Advantage of my present Trouble, I am rather a Loser by it.

Rather adding new Sins, than canceling the old, and so far from seeking thee with greater Earnestness, that the little I have hitherto done in thy Worship and Service, is now either omitted or done worse.

Help me, therefore, I beseech thee, O merciful Father, and remedy this great Weakness.

Give me Patience in this my Trouble, and by thy heavenly Grace support my Soul, that it sink not under this present Weight.

Teach me to be wise, in the right Management of what I suffer, that I may improve my present Misfortune to the Good of my Soul.

Awaken my Faith, and so strengthen it, that it may prevail against Nature, quiet all its Passions, and make me ashamed of grieving like a Heathen, when I am called upon by Heaven to suffer as a Christian.

Confirm me in Hope, that amidst whatever I suffer I may rest with an entire Confidence in thee; and that I may never think myself miserable, as long as I have the Comfort of thy Promises, and the Assurance of thy Protection.

Raise up my Heart from under the present Weight; and let me not vainly busy my Thoughts in what is past, and now is not, but in what is present. For how many great Blessings do I now enjoy, which demand my Thanks? And is it not a shameful Ingratitude, to forget all these, as if they were not, because I have one taken from me, or suffer in one.

How many good Things have I received from thy Hand, without ever thinking of the Mercy? And now being touched in one, which has been likewise thy Gift, how am I disturbed?

Grant me, O God, a better Spirit, and teach me to submit to thy Hand, with Thanksgiving, whether it brings a Blessing or a Scourge; especially since what seems to me a Scourge may be the greater Blessing.

For while I am thus oppressed with Grief, as unhappy, I must confess my Ignorance, that I know not what is best for me.

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This is known to thee, and, being thy Appointment, the Faith of thy infinite Goodness obliges me to think it for my Good. And what then do I in grieving, but call in Question thy Wisdom, or doubt of thy Goodness to me?

§. VI. If I look on thy only Son, I have Reason to think well of the Afflictions of this Life; since all his Life was nothing but a Cross and Martyrdom.

If I give Ear to his Voice, I have Reason to be comforted in my Troubles; since he invites all to take up their Cross, and thus to follow him.

If I hearken to his Promises, I have Reason to rejoice; since the Mourning of this World is promised to be changed into Joy.

If I consider his Apostles, I have Reason to give Thanks; since they, being Persons of his own Choice, and for whom he had prepared an eternal Crown, their whole Lives were nothing but Distress, Oppression, and Persecution.

Thus if I compare my present Circumstances with those who have been the Models of a Christian Life, I find sufficient Motives for banishing all Complaints, and to think of nothing else but of the Fruits of suffering, and how to suffer so, as to be in Hopes of obtaining them.

I have Encouragement enough for this Hope, since, from thy sacred Word, is given me this Assurance; that, if we suffer with Christ, we shall also be glorified together with him.

And is it not from the same I am informed, that the Sufferings of this Life are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that is to come? Why then is suffering the Occasion of my Grief; when, being so short, the divine Goodness has made it the Price of an eternal Crown?

When our light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.

This Prospect, this Hope, kept up the Spirits of the Apostles amidst far greater Trials than mine, so that while their outward Man perished, yet they fainted not; but their inward Man was renewed Day by Day.

They

They looked not at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen: For the Things which are seen are temporal; but the Things, which are not seen, are eternal. And why do I not look at the same, that I may be comforted with the same Hope?

§. VII. Learn then from the Apostles, who were by Christ appointed thy Masters and Teachers. Learn from St. Paul, who esteemed all Things but Loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ.

Who for Christ suffered the Loss of all Things, and counted them but as Dross, that he might win Christ and be found in him.

Who learned in whatever State he was, therewith to be content: Who knew how to be in Distress, and how to abound.

Who every where, and in all Things, was instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer Need; who could do all Things, through Christ, that strengthened him.

Who was often in Labours, often scourged, often in Prisons, and in Deaths often: Once stoned, thrice Ship-wrecked, and in all Kinds of Perils. And yet hear what he says, *I am filled with Comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our Tribulation.*

And canst thou, my Soul, only read, but learn nothing of this Lesson? Thou hast the same Master to teach thee, the same God to help thee, and the same Heaven for the Encouragement of thy Patience.

Why then, art thou so unlike him, having no Trials to compare with his; and yet cast down with Grief, where he is full of Joy?

And still thou professest thyself a Disciple to the same Master; blush, and be ashamed of thy Weakness, who, being a Disciple to a crucified Lord, hast not yet learned to stand against Trifles.

See how little Occasions are too-much for thy Patience; and when thou ownest the greatest Punishments to be due to thy Sins, even that an ordinary Trial is more than thou canst bear, without Murmuring and Disturbance.

Is this to be a Follower of the Apostles, and a Disciple of Jesus? Thy Rule is to suffer all Things; and thy Practice is to suffer nothing, but in Rebellion.

For

For what is all Passion, Grief, Resentment, Fretting, Dejection and Melancholy, but a Dislike of God's Will, and the Expressions of an Unwillingness to submit to it?

What are they, but so many Declarations against what God has ordered: And how does this agree with what thou every Day prayest for, that God's Will may be done?

§ VIII. O God, I own, this gives me a very ill Character of myself; but, behold, I lay all Weakness before thee, and most earnestly implore thy Goodness to remedy it.

If I approved my Unhappiness, or was pleased with this my Infirmitiy, I should then despair of thy Help; but since thou art Witness, that it is a Trouble to me, and that I esteem it my Misfortune to be thus weak; I hope thou wilt have Compassion on me, and give me Grace to be more patient in Provocations, and more submissive under whatever Trials, thou shalt please to send me.

And now, I beseech thee, to forgive my present Impatience; pardon me all my rebellious and uneasy Thoughts; remove all Solicitude; take away all Distrust; and now, from this Moment, so calm my Spirits, that I may resign myself entirely into thy holy Hands; submit with Peace to all thy Orders; judge that best, whatever thou appointest, and confide in thy Goodness; that thou wilt remember thy Promises to the Distressed and Desolate; be a Father and Comforter to me; and either deliver me from my present Trouble, or help me to bear it, as a Christian ought to do, to the Glory of thy Name, and the Good of my own Soul.

And thou, O Jesus, have Mercy on me; thou who hast undertaken to be our Advocate to the Father, plead now for me; obtain Pardon of my Sins. Thou, who hast been a Man of Sorrow, who hast known what Affliction is, have Compassion on me, in my Trouble, and obtain Patience for me, that I may suffer, as becomes a Follower of thee. Behold, I turn to thee, pouring forth my Soul before thee, under the Sense of my present Necessity. I know, thy Mercies

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to poor Sinners are infinite, and I have such Confidence in them, that I hope thou wilt hear my Prayer, and grant the Request I now make to thee.

§. IX. Jesu, Son of the living God, give me Patience, that I may suffer as thy Disciple.

Jesu, who being God, equal to the Father, tookest upon thee the Form of a Servant, wast despised and rejected by Men; a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Grief; give me Patience, that I may suffer as thy Disciple.

Jesu, who wast born in a Stable, laid in a Manger, because there was no Room for thee in the Inn, and thus beganest to suffer, as soon as thou wast born; give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.

Jesu, whose Life was sought by Herod, and didst fly into Egypt, to escape his Cruelty; give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.

Jesu, who, at eight Days old, wast circumcised, and didst then begin to shed thy Blood for Man; give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.

Jesu, who didst fast forty Days in the Desart, and wast there tempted by the Devil; give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.

Jesu, who didst travel a-foot through Heat and Cold, hungry and thirsty, preaching the Kingdom of God, and hadst no where to lay thy Head; give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.

Jesu, who didst go forth to the Mountain, and there continuedst all Night in Prayer; give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.

Jesu, who wast so undervalued, as for the Sake of a few Swine to be removed out of the Country of the Gergesenes; give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.

Jesu, who, having by thy divine Power cast out a Devil, wast accused by the envious Pharisees, as having wrought this Wonder by the Power of the Devil; give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.

Jesu, who wast represented by the Multitude as a Glutton, a Wine-bibber, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners; give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.

Jesu, who wast reproached in thy own Country, and despised; give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.

Jesu,

Jesu, who preaching to thy People, wast thrust out of the City, and led to the Brow of a Hill, to be cast down head-long; *give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.*

Jesu, against whom the Jews murmured, whilst thou wast instructing them in the Truth; *give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.*

Jesu, who wast hated by the World, whilst thou wast labouring to do it Good; *give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.*

Jesu, who teaching the Jews, wast most infamously reproached by them, as having a Devil; *give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.*

Jesu, who hadst thy Charity to the Jews so ill received, that they took up Stones to cast at thee; *give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.*

Jesu, who doing Good to all, hadst the Jews conspiring against thee; *give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.*

Jesu, who prostrate in the Garden, wast covered with a bloody Sweat; *give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.*

Jesu, who didst voluntarily open thy Soul to such inward Grief, that it was sad even unto Death; *give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.*

Jesu, who, in this Anguish of Spirit, didst ask the Father to let the Cup pass from thee, and at the same Time didst submit it to thy Father's Will; thy Will be done; *give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.*

Jesu, who wast betrayed by thy own Disciple, and sold for thirty Pieces of Silver; *give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.*

Jesu, who wast forsaken by all thy Disciples, and thrice denied by Peter; *give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.*

Jesu, who wast falsely accused before Annas and Caiphas, wast struck on the Face, and didst suffer such Contradiction of Sinners, against thee; *give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.*

Jesu, who wast blind-folded, buffeted, spit upon, who gavest thy Back to the Smiters, and thy Cheeks to them

them that plucked off the Hair; give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.

Jesu, who wast delivered by thy own People to Pilate; despised and mocked by Herod; and given up by Pilate to the Will of the Jews; give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.

Jesu, who wast scourged at a Pillar, crowned with Thorns, and stricken with a Reed; give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.

Jesu, who, having Barrabbas preferred before thee, wast condemned to a most shameful Death, wast led as a Sheep to the Slaughter, not opening thy Mouth; give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.

Jesu, who didst faint under the Cross, and, being come to Mount Calvary, wast fastened to it with Nails; give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.

Jesu, who wast reckoned with Transgressors, and crucified between two Thieves; give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.

Jesu, who wast made the Scorn of Men; blasphemed by those that passed by; derided by the Jews, mocked by the Soldiers, and reviled by the Malefactors; give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.

Jesu, who, in thy great Thirst, hadst Gall and Vinegar given thee to drink; give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.

Jesu, who dying didst commend thy Spirit into the Hands of thy Father; who wast obedient to Death, even the Death of the Cross; give me Patience, that I may suffer, as thy Disciple.

Jesu, hear us.

Jesus Christ, graciously hear us.

Let us pray.

LORD Jesus Christ, who, in Mercy to Man, wast pleased to suffer in all Kinds, that so thou mightest be a perfect Master to him, and teach him not only by Words, but also by Example: Mercifully vouchsafe, that as by Faith I confess thee to be my Lord, so, by the Help of thy Grace, I may follow thy Example, and now, at this Time, by Humility and Patience, shew

shew I am thy Disciple. Never more let me be impatient, being an unworthy Sinner; while I see thee, a spotless Lamb, my God and my Lord, voluntarily suffering such Rigours. Give me therefore Patience. O my Lord Jesus, that now, from this Moment, I may suffer, as thy Disciple.

H U M I L I T Y.

THIS Day I come before thee, my Lord God, to complain against myself, for the great Pride, to which I am subject. I must confess it a very surprizing Thing even to me, that such a poor, miserable, and contemptible Sinner, as I am, should be subject to this Evil, and find any Thing whereof to be proud: And yet so it is, that while I daily see myself worthy of Contempt; yet there is a general Pride accompanies me in all I do; even so far, that I scarce can think, or speak, or do, or suffer any Thing; but there is still some Design, Contrivance, or Proposal for gaining Esteem to myself.

"Thou seest, O my God, how it is with me, in this Point; and how great my Injustice is, in this general Contrivance for magnifying this despicable Clay. I fear a great Part is hid from me, which I see not; and yet so far I see, as gives me great Disquiet, and is enough to humble me, did I but remember or believe what I see.

I see, I am nothing of myself, and have nothing of my own: All whatever I possess of Nature or Fortune, is thy Gift, or rather, only lent me; so that, at thy Word or Demand, I am deprived of all; am left naked, without Senses, Memory, or Understanding; without Form or Beauty; without Friends, or Health, or Necessaries for a common Subsistence. None of these are my own, but wholly depend upon thy Favour; and, if taken from me, I am no more capable of recovering, than the vilest Worms that creep upon the Earth: So that whatever I have more than these is not mine, but lent: And is there not something humbling enough in this one Thing, without requiring more, that whatever Appearance a Person makes in the World, he

has nothing that sets him off, but what is borrowed, and must be returned again?

I see likewise, amidst all the Appearance I can make, and the Height of my Esteem, that my Ingredients are Filth, Rottenness, and Corruption; these are inseparable from me; and continual Art and Care are necessary to conceal them; so that the best I can make of all my Glory is to resemble a beautiful Sepulchre, which has no more than the Beauty of an outward Case, while all that is within is loathsome.

It is true, I have a rational Soul, admirable for its many Perfections, by which I am capable of knowing, loving, and enjoying God. But, when I reflect upon the many Ways by which I abuse this thy wonderful Gift, there is nothing more humbling to me, than this, which ought to be my greatest Glory.

For what a Blemish is it upon me, that being created for the everlasting Possession of thee, my God, I neglect this, and run after Trifles, Smoke, and Bubbles; and seek such Things, as, pleasing the Senses, have nothing substantial in them? What is this, but to have the Weakness of Children, which give Rattles and Sugar-plumbs the Preference to whatever is most valuable? This is certainly childish.

What an Undervaluing is it again, that being called to the Fellowship of Angels, and to the Glory of thy eternal Kingdom, I make myself a Slave to Creatures; and this with the Hazard of becoming a Slave to Devils? This is certainly foolish.

What is it again, that, having Hell open before me, I go on sporting and dancing, and comfortably entertaining myself in the very Ways that lead to it? This is certainly Madness.

What is it, that having the Sentence of Death passed against me, with the Day and the Hour appointed for Execution; and this without any Hopes of Reprieve; and hastening on every Moment to the Place, where I am to die, I seek all Entertainments, and not only idle, but sinful Diversions, on the Way, as if I had the Command of Life in my own Hands, or there were no Necessity of preparing for what I am to suffer.

This

This is certainly a Stupidity and more than Madness.

What is it, that, being upon the Entrance to Eternity, I am more solicitous and busy about a few Moments, that are the Way to it, and soon end, than upon that everlasting Duration, which is never to have an End?

What is it, that having a God, who has encompassed me with many Blessings, and prepared yet greater for me; I go on, studying how to please myself, but little concerned how to please him.

What is it, that having a God, who, in Mercy to me, humbled himself to the Meanness of a Servant, so to become my Redeemer; I live almost unmindful of his Mercy, and every Day ungratefully rebel against him, as against an Enemy.

What is it, that living in a State of Pleasure, for a few Moments, and seeking, for this short Time, to be easy, great, esteemed, and honoured: I am every Day waiting, when I am to be snatched away, to be stripped of all I possess or admire, and may, in one Moment, be cast under the Feet of Devils, and be made their Scorn for ever.

These are Part of my Circumstances, and help to make up my Character; in which there are several Particulars so very mean, base, miserable, and contemptible, that one would think there needed no more to keep me in a perpetual Humility, and secure me against all the Dangers of Pride. For what can be more humbling, than this Childishness, this Bluntness, this Folly, this Ingratitude, this Stupidity, this Madness, this Treachery! And yet behold, my God, such is my Unhappiness, that although I know myself thus miserable; yet I am daily valuing this Clay in my own Heart, set it above others as more worthy of Esteem, and am endeavouring by all Ways to deceive others into an Opinion of its Deserts.

Now this being an evident Injustice, and such as has many pernicious Attendants; I beseech thee, O God, to grant me thy Grace, that I may make Resistance against all Kinds of Pride; both as to its open Pretences, its disguised Workings, and subtle Insinuations.

me a true Horror of it, as it deserves; and since thou hast been pleased to exprest thy Displeasure against it, in thy severe Judgments against the Angels, so as to expell those glorious Spirits from thy Presence, and change them into the Monsters of Devils; vouchsafe to possess my Scul with a continual Dread of this Evil, that I may always be afraid of provoking thee by it.

For what can I expect, I, who am otherwise so great a Sinner; if I add this Provocation to all the rest? What can I expect who already stand so much in need of thy Mercy, if I take this Way of every Day encreasing thy Displeasure against me? Wherefore, O God, I beseech thee, to preserve in my Mind a continual Sense of my Misery and great Unworthiness: Let this be ever so before my Eyes: that I may see, how unreasonable, and unjust, are all the Attempts of Pride; that I may be resolute in standing against them, and never admit of that, which, in pretending to raise me, is the surest Means of casting me down into the lowest Degree of Contempt, which is to be contemned by thee.

For since I know, that it is neither I myself, nor the World, but thou alone, my God, canst make me happy; and all the Good I expect is from thy Favour; what can be more against Reason, than for me to seek the Esteem of the World, or to be pleasing in my own Eyes? Whatever I gain, in this Point, will it be any Gain to me? Shall I be nearer Heaven for this, or in greater Hopes of finding Grace in thy Sight? I confess, O God, all this will be nothing to my Advantage; but much rather my Loss in provoking me to Pride, and furnishing me with continual Matter to feed it? And that my only Interest is, in being acceptable to thee.

Grant then, O God, that my great Concern may be, not to please myself or the World, but to seek thy Favour, and since thou hast declared, that thou regardest the Humble, and resistest the Proud; let it be the Effect of thy Grace in me, to suppress all Motions of Pride, and to practise that true Humility, such as the World esteems not, but is above all esteemed by thee.

Deliver me from all Pride of Judgement, that I be never obstinate against the Light of Reason or Faith; that

that I defend not Opinions with Passion, nor despise those who join not with my Sentiments in Things that either have no Evidence, or are of little Concern: That I never undervalue those; whose Capacity seems not great, nor endeavour to set off my own Abilities; by exposing their Weakness: Rather O God, let me be ever ready to yield to Truth, and never think it an Affront to my Judgement, to submit to thine. Let me allow to others the Freedom I take, and in Things uncertain, suppose myself as much subject to Mistake as them. And, wherever I imagine any Advantage in myself above others, let the next Thoughts be, whose Gift it is; what Thanks are due; and what an Account have I to give, who make so ill Use of what I have received. Thus, O God, while with Constancy I adhere to what thou hast been pleased to reveal, let me ever preserve such a Freedom of Judgement, as to all other Things, as to be jealous of all Obstinacy and Stiffness, which can be suspected as the Effects of Pride or Self-conceit.

Grant likewise, O God, that I may be watchful in suppressing all such Thoughts, as are busy in admiring, valuing, or setting any Esteem upon myself above others; as likewise all those, which give me Satisfaction in seeing the Weaknesses, Indiscretions, or Miscarriages of others; which are an Occasion of thinking better of myself, and of concluding that others will do so too. All Thoughts of this Kind, I see, to be the Effect of Pride; and therefore I beseech thee, O God, to defend me from them, or give me Grace to stand against them. Let me never think these innocent, which proceed from such an ill Root, and serve only to magnify that which deserves to be despised.

No, my God, as often as such pleasing Thoughts occur, let me cast them off with Indignation; as not bearing any Thing favourable of so wretched a Creature, so ungrateful a Sinner, so wicked a Traitor as I am, let them serve to awaken in me the Thoughts of all my Misery, and bring to my Remembrance my past and present Iniquities by which I have provoked thee, my God, and stand exposed to an uncertain

Eternity. And, if still they importune and press upon me, let me turn to myself with Horror, and say, Have not the Devils, as they are, greater Excellencies and Abilities than thou canst boast of, and yet they are Devils still? Why then dost thou extol thyself, thou proud Clay?

Vouchsafe likewise to grant, O God, that upon receiving any Reproof, whether just or unjust, or upon apprehending myself affronted, ridiculed, slighted, or neglected, I may give a Check to all swelling, revengeful, contradictory, or reproaching Thoughts; as likewise to all Inclinations to Fretting, Vexation, or Sadness; for all these are nothing better, than so many different Effects of an impatient Pride, which, not knowing how to bear such Humiliation, has so many several Ways to express its Aversion to them; and therefore ought never to be connived at, as reasonable, but resisted as sinful.

Wherefore, I beseech thee, O God, that through thy Grace I may be ever watchful against all such Motions or inward Disturbance; so as to consider them, as great Weaknesses, and disengage my Heart from them, as from the Enemies of my Soul: Let me then labour to make my proud Heart bend under the Exercise, and use all Means to compose my Thoughts according to the Gospel. Turn all my Thoughts then upon my own Unworthiness, and by that View, being convinced, how vile a Sinner I am, let me acknowledge the Justice of all that I suffer; and not only submit to it with Patience, but cry out, thou art just, O Lord, in all thy Ways: It is good that thou hast humbled me: I have often insolently rebelled against thee, and now it is fit, I should be humbled: Thus, O God, let me rather rejoice, than grieve under the Humiliation.

Help me likewise, O God, to receive all Correction, the Commands of those over me, the Advice of Friends or others, with a peaceable and humble Mind: Let no Passion then grow upon me, nor impatient Resentments disturb my Soul, nor a sullen Obstinacy harden me against the Charity designed for my Good. Assist me, I beseech thee, in these Circumstances, to defeat
all

all the Attempts of Pride, and to stifle those Inclinations, which may be then rising from the Corruption of my Heart; let thy powerful Grace dispel them all, and work in my Soul a general Calm; let me then know what it is to be humble, and by Humility both preserve my inward Peace, and receive the Benefit of others Piety towards me.

I implore thy Grace again for the Remedy of another inward Pride; such as makes me unwilling to own Mistakes, and to mend them, when their Discovery is not from myself, but from what I observe or hear from others. This is certainly Pride, and shews that I have a greater Value for myself, than for Right or Truth; since I choose to desert these, rather than own that I have been in the Wrong. This has no Cure, but by Humility, which I now ask of thee, my God, and beseech thee to grant it; that by this my Spirit may be brought to the Temper of the Gospel, and my Soul fitted to receive the manifold Blessings of thy Mercy, which I every Day want.

But above all, deliver me, I beseech thee, from all spiritual Pride; from Presumption; from all vain Confidence in my own Merits; from valuing myself as just, and despising others as not so good. These, I confess, are the Characters of the Pharisee; are enough to make void and quite overthrow whatever Good a Christian may otherwise do, so as to be rejected by God, while he is pleasing himself with the Imagination of being a Saint. I most earnestly therefore implore thy Grace, O God, that this may not be my Sin: That I may carefully watch against it, and, with Speed, reject all those Thoughts which put me in Danger of it. Grant, O God, that I may be afraid of that against which thou hast so plainly declared thy Displeasure. Let me never exalt myself in my own Thoughts, nor undervalue others; for this is thy Prerogative to be Judge of all; and, if I usurp it, this must be to my own Ruin. O God, form in me such a Heart as is pleasing to thee, and let me leave it to thee, to be my Judge and my Crown.

Having hitherto begged thy Assistance against inward Pride, that is, the Pride of the Heart, I now implore

thy Help against all the Branches of it; and, in the first Place, that it may not shoot forth into the Tongue, or have any Influence upon my Words. In this Point, I beseech thee, O God, to shew thy Mercy, and grant the Petition of thy Servant; for I acknowledge here my Weakness, and that I am in great Want of thy Help.

For how often do I publish, and even force such Things into Discourse, as I think will help to raise my Reputation with others, and gain their Esteem; although at the same Time I know, that such as seek Glory with Men, have in this received the Reward of whatever Good they have done, and are to expect nothing from God?

How often do I draw others into such Discourse, and, by some Hints, insensibly bring it on, though at the same Time pretending an Unwillingness to speak of such a Subject?

How often do I tell Untruths in Favour of Vanity; adding or diminishing as may be serviceable to this End; and thus sacrilegiously endeavouring to raise myself by trampling upon thy Commandments?

How often do I pretend the Knowledge of what I know not, for feeding my own vain Humour?

How often do I lay open the Indiscretions and Failings of others, that I may shew the great Advantage I have over them?

How often do I break forth into passionate Apologies, into Quarrels, and Disputes, upon the Suggestion of Pride, because I have not Humility to bear any Thing that is provoking, or seems to be an Affront to me?

How often do I make bold with Truth, and by forced Glosses and Constructions conceal whatever I apprehend will be a lessening to me?

How often does a vain Ostentation employ my Tongue, and even sometimes so as to boast of such Things of which I ought to be shamed?

Innumerable, O God, are the Ways in which my Tongue is in the Service of my Pride. And this shews the great Corruption of my Heart, and how much it stands in need of thy Grace. Consider me therefore, O God of Mercy, under all this my Weakness, of which now

now I am ashamed, and give me Grace to amend : Give me Grace to resist these several Motions of Pride; teach me to govern my Tongue, and then ever to be silent when Pride or Vanity want some Speeches to be made for them. I have hitherto given these too much the Liberty of my Tongue : I wish I could say with Truth I had as often employed it to thy Glory: But see here my great Misery, O God, I speak freely in an ill Cause; but when I am to speak for thee, here I am ashamed; and that very Bashfulness which ought to restrain me from Sin, is a Tie upon me, and hinders me from doing Good. In this I see how miserable I am, and therefore now appeal to thy infinite Goodness to have Compassion on me, and to grant me this Petition, that Pride or Vanity may have no more the Command of my Tongue.

§. II. But I have still a farther Petition to thee, O God, against these Evils; for upon Enquiry I find, that not only my Tongue, but almost all the Actions of my Life have been confederate, and unhappily drawn in to take Part with them against thee, I am ashamed to say it, against thee, my God. In this, I confess, my Sins have been multiplied beyond Number; but behold, my God, upon the Conviction of all this Pride, I now humble myself before thee this Day, most earnestly imploring thy Mercy for the Pardon of all that is past, and thy Grace to strengthen me and to prevent all Return.

Pardon me, O God, for the numberless Times I have laid out Money in the Service of Pride or Vanity, and given these the Command of my Purse. Here my Sins are a Confusion to me, because they are above Number; being scarce able to say with Truth, that for some Years I have at any Time laid out Money without having Pride of my Council, and Vanity to give Directions how it should be employed.

How far has this been done in Cloths, Furniture, and providing for Table? In all which I have not so much considered what Necessity or a moderate Decency required, as what was most agreeable to my own vain Humour; how to make myself more valuable in my own Opinion, and in that of the World.

For this End how much have I wasted, without regarding those better Uses in which I might have employed my Money to my own eternal Good? But so it has been; Vanity has so prevailed, that, to favour and comply with this, I have neglected all whatever belongs to Eternity. I have let the Poor starve to feed my Pride.

These have been crying Sins; but I beseech thee, O Lord, to pardon them; for behold I now see the great Iniquity of them, in hearkening to Vanity more than to thy Commands; in contriving to set out a rotteh Carcass, and seeking to make that honourable which, for its great Unworthiness, deserved nothing but to be despised. But now humbled under the Sense of these my Offences, I prostrate myself before thee, my God, and sue for Mercy. Turn not thy Face away from me, but let me now find the Effect of thy infinite Goodness, by receiving into thy Favour one who has shewed himself unworthy of all Favours, by the many Blessings which hitherto he has so ungratefully abused.

But in vain do I ask Forgiveness of what is past, if, by thy Grace, I be not strengthened against this great Evil. Wherefore I most earnestly beseech thee, O God, to take from me all Pride or Vanity, or prepare me to stand against it. Suffer me no more to follow its Suggestions, in laying out my Money, nor to have any Regard to whatever it advises. Let me no more consult a vain World, or the corrupt Practices of Men, in what I have to do, since I cannot follow such deceitful Guides without intending to be led out of the Way. But let it be now my general Method, to consider what *Necessity*, what *Reason*, what *Moderation*, what a *prudent Decency* requires: Let it be my Rule in all Things, to examine what the *Gospel* directs, what is most agreeable to thy *holy Will*; and let this ever carry it against all other Inclinations and Motions whatever.

Thus, O God, may I go on for the future in all that belongs to Dressing, Furniture, Table or Retinue; in all which I beseech thy infinite Goodness so to govern my Passions, that, I may do what is reasonable and christian;

christian ; but that I may not be prevailed on by Pretexts of Decency or Convenience, to flatter a vain Humour, which makes Use of all Arguments to gain its Point. Vouchsafe, O Lord, to help me here, for I confess my Weakness, and that I can have no Confidence but in the Assistance of thy Grace. O God, what Treasures might I have now laid up in Heaven for the eternal Comfort of my Soul, had I distributed that amongst the Poor which I have laid out to satisfy my Pride ! Prevent, I beseech thee, this ill Management, and for the future let thy Grace make me wiser.

This same Petition I extend, O God, as to all other Particulars, that I may be delivered from the Tyranny of Pride. For I find its Commands to be very universal ; even so far, that there is scarce any Action, Appearance, Meeting, Visit, Undertaking, or Proposal of Life, but where Pride gives its Orders, is very much considered, and has a great Share in the Management of all that is done. And how great a Confusion ought this to be to Christians, to reflect, that having received all from God, and being obliged to offer all to his Glory, make his Will their Rule, and seek him in all they do : They, instead of this, take Advice with Pride, and, as if Pride were their God, make this the Beginning and End of all ? As far as it has been thus with me (and how often, O God, has it been so ?) I here acknowledge the Impiety of it : I solicit for thy Mercy, and beseech thee to forgive it ; and here add this most hearty Request, that by the Help of thy Grace, I may have that true Horror of Pride as to detest all its Suggestions, and cast all that by as unreasonable whatever it pleads for. May I be ashamed for the future to set up such an Idol, and rather choose to spurn at it than follow it. Be thou my God, and as I worship thee alone, so in all Things may I be solicitous to do thy Will alone, and renounce whatever is contrary or disagreeable.

For this End I implore thy Grace, that having a Sense of thy holy Will, and of thy Duty, I may not omit the least Part of it, upon the Apprehension of any Disgrace, or of being laughed at, either by Ignorance, Infidelity, or Vice. For all such Omissions having

having Pride at the Root, they involve a Guilt, from which I here desire to be delivered; and therefore beg, that I may have such a true Humility, joined with the Love of Duty as willingly to provoke Scorn and expose myself to Contempt, by doing on all Occasions what they holy Will demands of me: And even then, when I foresee I shall be charged with Hypocrisy or Vain-glory.

This Degree of Humility I ask, because I know there is a vicious Sort of Bashfulness which is an Enemy to Virtue, and many Times destroy the Soul; because it is ashamed of Duty, when this happens to be reputed out of Fashion, and therefore so often fails in it, as it happens into ill Company. Now, since this Bashfulness is an Effect of Pride, which cannot bear Contempt upon any Account, I see Humility to be necessary for the Practice of a Christian Life, and, for this Reason; most humbly petition for it, that by the Help of this I may be freed from this so frequent Discouragement of all that is good.

I ask again, O God, that whatever Duty I perform, whether in Devotion to thee, or Charity to my Neighbour, or in the Observance of thy Commandments, I may do it with Purity of Intention, and the sincere Desire of doing thy holy Will; that so they may find Acceptance in thy Sight, in order to my eternal Good. Let none of these Exercises, I beseech thee, be defiled with Pride, nor let Vanity creep in to rob thy Altar of any of those Sacrifices which belong to thee. In all these may I ever seek thy Glory alone; and if Thoughts of being reputed pious steal in, I desire to renounce them as sacrilegious, and do at this Time most solemnly renounce them, as to whatever Part of my Life is yet to come. For I know it is a most provoking Crime to prophane holy Things, and prostitute them to common Uses: And what then must it be to turn the Practices of Religion and Exercises of Devotion to the Service of Vanity; For what is this but to take what belongs to God and give it to his greatest Enemies, to Self-love, to Pride, and to the Devil? From this, O God, I beseech thee to deliver me.

Upon

Upon the same Consideration I ask of thee, that I may never be so indiscreet as to let Pride feed upon Humility; and that if at any Time, through thy Grace, I practise any Degree of Humility, I may not be vain, or seek Glory in whatever I have done. Let all Glory be to thee, O God; and as for me, let me glory in nothing but in being thought a weak, miserable, and wretched Sinner, as I truly am. This is all that I can call my own; and if I love Truth I must desire to be esteemed so; and if I desire otherwise, I desire a Lye. How great then, O God, is the Lye of Vanity and Pride! From thi I beseech thee to deliver me.

And now, O God, that I may conclude all the numerous Branches of this spreading Evil under one Petition, I beseech thee so to assist me with thy heavenly Light and Grace, that I may discern and fight against all inward and outward Pride: Suffer me not to be blind and partial here, to abhor it in one Way, and let it be a Favourite in another. This is what I very much suspect and fear in myself, as knowing how easy it is to be deceived in condemning the particular Pride of some with a greater Pride of my own. But against this Delusion I beg thy Assitance, O God; making it my Request to thee, that my Humility may be sincere, and shew itself in the equal Abhorrence of all Kinds of Pride.

Possess my Mind with a Contempt of the Applause of Men, and let it be my constant Judgement, that there is no other Greatness worth my seeking, but to be great with thee. For this End, may it be my daily Busines to observe what is most capable of recommending me to thy Favour. And since thy Will in this is already declared, that thou exaltest the Humble, and resistest the Proud, let it be my perpetual Care to decline all the Methods of Pride, and to follow whatever I apprehend to be that Humility which thou approvest. And if by so doing I am pointed at, censured as a Hypocrite, or made the Scorn of Men, let not this be my Trouble, to be despised by those whose good Word I have more Reason to fear than seek; but let it be my Comfort, that being here humbled, I am in the surest Way of being exalted by thee.

And

And if there be any here on Earth whose good Opinion I ought to value, let it not be those who admire Noise, Flutter, Vanity, and Smoke, but those who esteem nothing more honourable than Virtue and the strict Observance of the Gospel of Christ. According to this Method, may I never seek Esteem from outward Ornaments, from Attendants, Titles, Preferments, or taking Place; for what is there of real Worth in all these, which are as much the Claim of Infidels, and of the greatest Sinners, as of any others; and under all which a Person may be most contemptible before thee, through the great Deformity of his Soul, and the Abominations in which he lives.

But let it be my Concern to seek the Ornaments of the inward Man, and to walk in the Ways of Charity, Humility, Moderation, Meekness, and Peace; not to be conformed to the World, to mortify the Deeds of the Flesh, and to live by the Spirit. For though in this Way the World may despise me, yet I am sure to be esteemed by thee, and by all those who know what the Honour of Virtue is; and this is much more to the Purpose than all the World can do. For the Applause of the World, with all its Honours, perishes with the Breath of Men, is soon laid in Dust, swallowed up by the Grave, and too often followed with the eternal Contempt of Devils; but the Glory that is from thee, has present Comforts above what the World cannot give, and brings forth Fruit to the everlasting Bliss of the Soul.

O God, who didst hear the Petition of thy Servant *Abraham*, when, in the Confession of being Dust and Ashes, he humbled himself in thy Sight; mercifully grant that in the same Spirit I may make my Addresses to thee, and not in the Profession of Words, but by a real Humility endeavour to gain thy favourable Acceptance of whatever Petitions I offer to thee that are for my eternal Good.

O God, who hast given us the Instance of an excellent Spirit in thy Servant *David*, first in humbling himself, like the meanest of his Subjects, before the Ark; then, in not regarding the Scorn of *Micahol*, who both reproached him with Words, and despised him in her Heart;

Heart ; and lastly, in resolving, amidst the Heat of these Reproaches, to humble himself still more, and become more vile and base in his own Sight ; grant, I beseech thee, that by his Example I may learn not to be too nice in what humbles ; that no Apprehension of Reproach may discourage me from thy Service ; but that I may rather willingly embrace Contempt, wherever Duty presses, or thy Glory is concerned. Great Grace is necessary for thus overcoming Nature, and making Pride yield ; but nothing is difficult, O God, to thee.

O God, who in the Kings and People of *Israel* humbling themselves in thy Sight, and thus turning away thy Judgements from them, which they had provoked by their Sins, hast in this shewed us how powerful a true Humiliation is with thee for obtaining thy Mercy ; grant, I beseech thee, that in this so approved Method I may daily seek thy Mercy, that, knowing myself a Sinner, I may truly humble myself as becomes a Sinner, and thus endeavour to prevent those severe Judgements which I have provoked by my Pride. How great, O God, is thy Goodness in calling upon Sinners, and shewing them how to find Mercy ! And how blind are Sinners in following the Ways of Pride, when they know how provoking it is to thee.

O God, who in *Ester* has given us a wonderful Example of Humility, in her hating the Glory of the Wicked, in abhorring the Marks of her Dignity which she wore on her Head, in detesting it as a worthless Thing ; in being in the Greatness of a Court, and yet having no Joy but in thee alone ; vouchsafe, I beseech thee, to grant me this Spirit, that having a Knowledge of my own Unworthiness, I may have likewise an Abhorrence of whatever is to set forth this sinful Clay ; that I may dislike whatever Part of it my Circumstances oblige me to use ; that I may have no Satisfaction in what is so unjust, but only in thee, my God. O blessed God ! how far am I from this holy Disposition of Soul, who am fond of all that which thy chosen Servants abhor, and seek that which they decline ! create in me a new Heart, O God, that I may no more

more be in Love with Vanity ; but seek thee above all Things, who alone art my Happiness.

O blessed Jesus, who, coming into this World to teach us the Way of Salvation, didst choose the poor, mean, and humble Things of this World, and hadst no Part in its State, Riches, Vanity, or Greatness ; mercifully grant that, professing myself thy Disciple, I may be always mindful that it is my Duty to follow thy Spirit. Give me Grace, I beseech thee, to follow it ; and let this be the daily Proof, that I choose the contemptible Things of this World, and decline all its Pomps and Greatness : For how shall I be a Disciple of Christ, if I walk contrary to him, and even follow the World !

O Jesus, who hast commanded all thy Followers to learn of thee, who art meek and humble of Heart, that so they may find Rest for their Souls ; give me Grace, I beseech thee, to learn this Lesson, that I may be in all Things meek and truly humble of Heart. Great and frequent are the Disturbances caused within me by Pride, Stubbornness, and Passion, and often they set me at Difference with my Neighbour. Meekness and Humility are prescribed by thee, as the Way to Peace ; O Jesus ! when shall I thus seek Rest for my Soul !

O Jesus, who didst put thy Apostles in mind, that thou camest into this World, not to be served but to serve, and didst command them to become the Servants of all ; grant, I beseech thee, that by thy Humility my Pride may be cured, so that as often as for the future I shall be put upon Things which seem beneath me, I may not be disturbed and swell, as one affronted, but rejoice in the Opportunity of practising that Humility which Christ, both by Word and Example, has taught me. For why should I, a Sinner, think any Thing beneath me, when thou, my Redeemer and my God, didst stoop to the meanest of all Things ?

O Jesus, who didst condemn the Pharisees for loving to be honoured by Men, for seeking the chief Seats in the Synagogue and at Feasts, and for endeavouring to be reputed devout ; preserve me, I beseech thee, from these

these Evils, that while I make Profession of being thy Disciple, I may not act like a Pharisee. And what else am I, if I let all their Vanity prevail in my Heart, and am governed by it? If I study to be respected, and sacrifice my Money and Time for this End; if I am solicitous for taking Place, and have no Charity for those who either deny or dispute it with me; if I affect Titles, and contrive all Ways for gaining Esteem; what are these but the very Ingredients which make up the Pharisee! How miserable then must my Condition be, while I follow not that which Christ taught, but the very Things he condemned in his greatest Enemies? O Jesus, when wilt thou reform this unhappy Soul?

O Jesus, who hast declared to us, That he who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted; Give me Grace, I beseech thee, to remember this Lesson, and to make it the Rule of my Life. I must here own it with Confusion before thee, that though thou hast thus plainly manifested thy Will to us, it made so little Impression on me, that I have hitherto contrived in all Things to exalt myself, and have been afraid of every Thing that humbles, as of a Misfortune, rather than embraced it as a Christian Good. O Jesus, and what will be my eternal Lot, if I thus go on calling thee Lord, and regarding nothing that thou sayest to me? Pardon, I beseech thee, this great Neglect, and now change my Heart; that, making Eternity my great Business, I may chuse to be humbled on Earth, that I may be exalted by thee; and be afraid of every Thing that exalts here, lest, with the Proud of Heart I be cast off from thee.

O Jesus, who, in the Person of the Pharisee, hast shewed us, how criminally displeasing it is to thee to confide in ourselves, or in what we do, and to despise others; and in the Publican hast discovered, how powerful true Humility is for obtaining the Favour of Heaven; possess my Soul, I beseech thee, with the Sense of what thou hast taught; make me afraid of every Thought that is in Favour of myself, and inclines me to rest with Confidence in what I have done. Give me .

me a Horror of every Glance that seems a lessening to my Neighbour; and this more especially, if it be attended with a Contempt of him; since I cannot despise him, but it will be to my own Prejudice in the Danger of losing thee. Rather, O God, let me entertain a mean Opinion of myself, and with Readiness embrace whatever is an Humiliation to me; and if Nature be uneasy, let me remember this is nothing but Pride, and that to make this bend is one of the best Sacrifices I can offer to thee. How many, O Jesus, have been the Sins of my Pride! Grant I may now make no more Additions to them, but, by the Practice of all Kinds of Humility, endeavour to cancel their Guilt.

O Jesus, who by thy Apostle hast assured us, that God resisteth the Proud, and gives Grace to the Humble, and that he has chosen the Things which are despised; grant, I beseech thee, that I may seek thy Grace in that Way which I have learned from thee, to be most effectual for obtaining it. Grant I may embrace all the Occasions of Humility, as the best Expedients of Grace. Grant I may never be troubled at what is so much for my Interest, but be contented to be humbled. And, as for all the Suggestions and Contrivances of Pride, O God, may I be faithful in resisting them; since, however agreeable Pride is to Nature, I have thy Word for it, that by Pride I shall make thee my Enemy. Wherefore I ask of thee, O blessed Redeemer, who didst humble thyself to Death, even the Death of the Cross, that thou shew this Mercy to thy Servant, and give me a truly humble Spirit; such a Spirit as neither Nature, the World, nor Practice of Men, shall be able to lead me into the Ways of Pride; such a Spirit as may conduct me in thy Ways: And what are thy Ways, O Jesus, but the Ways of Humility, and not of Pride.

Good Use of Sunday.

O MERCIFUL Lord, who hast ordained a Day to be kept holy, that on it Man might pay sovereign Homage to thee his Creator, praise and adore thy

thy holy Name, and employ it in such other pious Exercises as might be most helpful for his eternal Good : Grant that I, thy Creature and the Work of thy Hands, may be solicitous in the Observance of this thy holy Ordinance, so as to answer all those Purposes for which it was appointed, to the Glory of thy Name, and the everlasting Good of my Soul.

For this End I most heartily implore thy Grace, to preserve or deliver me from those many Ways by which this Day is abused by Sloth and ill Custom, or profaned by Irreligion and Vice. Thou hast expressly forbidden, O Lord, on this Day, all servile Labour both to Man and Beast, that so Man, resting from his usual Labour, might have the better Opportunity for attending to the greater Duties then prescribed. This is thy express Order, O God, and I confess the Mercy of the Appointment. Grant, I beseech thee, that I may be ever careful in observing it ; that I may neither work myself nor require it of others, but only so far as Necessity demands it. Let not Interest prevail on me to transgres these Bounds ; since no Gain can be lawful when the Work is a Violation of thy Precept.

Let no Sort of Curiosity, Pride, Niceness, Vanity, or Appetite so far prevail, as to take up that Time which ought to be better employed. These, at the best, are great Weaknesses, and how often are they sinful ? What a Sacrilege then must it be to take away that Time which God has consecrated to himself and to his Service, and to give it to these ! O God, I see an Injustice in this, I acknowledge it to be prophane ; and I beseech thee to preserve me by thy Grace, that I fall not under this provoking Impiety.

Grant likewise, O God, that the same ill Principles may not be Motives to me, for employing others beyond what Necessity requires, and so robbing them of that Time which thy Mercy has designed them for the Good of their Souls. I confess it a particular Effect of thy Goodness towards such poor Souls as labour all the Week, to command a Rest on this Day, that so on it they may labour for Heaven. And I must confess it a great Wickedness in me, if I permit my Humour or Self-love to be the Disappointment of this thy Goodness,

ness, and to set them at Work when thou hast commanded them to be at Rest from my Service, and be at Leisure for thine.

Wherefore I beseech thee, O God, that on these Days I may not hearken to my Inclinations, in setting others to unnecessary Work; but that I may concur with the Mercy of this Institution, and contrive how to find Leisure for all; that so I may be a Hindrance to none, in partaking of the Benefit of thy Goodness. There is some Busines cannot be excused on this Day; but can none of that be excused which I require to be done? Is all that necessary which is not done for Necessity, but only in Compliance with my Ways, and to please me? I fear, when all comes to be examined, it will not be so judged. Consider then this Matter well, and leave it not to Custom or Inclination to be the Judge. See what thou canst abate of what is usually done. See where would be the Injury if such Things were omitted? And if there be any Difficulty, whether it would not be a Charity in thee to suffer such a Trouble for their Good who are under thy Care. Consider, contrive, and submit to some Inconvenience for those, the Account of whose Souls will be demanded in part of thee. Grant, O God, I may do thus; grant that I may be willing to relinquish my own Ways, where Charity calls for it, and when it is in Favour of thy Commandments.

I ask likewise thy Grace, O God, that on this Day I may not indulge myself in Sleep and Sloth; for although thou hast commanded a Rest from Labour, yet this cannot be interpreted in Favour of Laziness; for this would be to make thee concur to my Corruption and Sin. Thy Goodness has a much better Design, and I implore thy Assistance, that my Endeavours may be directed to the same End; that on this Day I may take large Steps towards Heaven, and, instead of favouring, may oppose all that which would be my Hindrance in this Way.

One of these Hindrances is Sloth; for this ties up the Hands, and cramps all the Powers of the Soul; and such an Enemy it is to thy Service, that if I accustom myself to yield to it, I am fully persuaded I

cannot

cannot long continue faithful to thee. Grant therefore I beseech thee, O Lord, that on a Day when thou callest me towards Heaven, I may not be so ungrateful to thee, and so forgetful of my own Good, as then to give myself to the Conduct of such treacherous Guides as lead infinite Numbers into Hell. And are not Sloth and Self-love such Guides? Permit me not, O Lord, I beseech thee, to yield to them. Let me not sleep away the Day, which, being sanctified by thee, ought to be likewise sanctified by me, and not idly consumed in Sloth.

Besides Sloth, I ask of thee, O Lord, thy Grace, that I may resist all other idle Inclinations on this Day; that I may not lose it in unprofitable Conversation, in Entertainments, in prophane Books, in Visits, in Vanity, much less in such Company as encourage Intemperance, or betray such an Indisposition of Soul, as to make that their Diversion which is sinful, and involves the Contempt of thy holy Will. Grant me, O Lord, I most humbly beseech thee, this Grace. For how unhappy must I otherwise be, if through my Fault I lose the Advantage of this Day, and not only lose it, but by wretchedly prophaning what thou hast sanctified, provoke thy Judgements against me.

Give me not over, O merciful God, to this reprobate Sense, but graciously preserve in me a sincere Respect for every Thing that is holy; since I am very sensible, that to lose Respect for what thou thyself hast set apart and sanctified, is within one Step of despising thee. Wherefore I beseech thee, that I may never fall into this Sin, but be ever afraid of it as of Hell; may I ever honour thy Mercies, and have a grateful Sense of thy infinite Goodness to Man, and in particular of this holy Institution, so far as to be afraid not only of abusing, but even of neglecting it. For this End, as I have hitherto implored thy Goodness; to deliver me from all Prophanations of this Day; so now I most humbly petition for thy Grace, that I may duly perform all the Obligations of it.

And, in the first Place, let it be the Effect of thy Grace, O God, in me, that I be never wanting, through my Fault, at thy public Worship on this Day. Give me

me both a Desire and Zeal for performing this Duty, that whereas Man, for himself and all other Creatures, is bound to acknowledge and worship thee his Creator, sovereign Lord, and merciful Benefactor, I may be ever forward in paying this Homage of Adoration, Praise, and Thanksgiving, and do it in the most solemn Manner I can; so to answer, in our poor Way, the Glory of thy infinite Power and Goodness, and rejoicing in public Assemblies, to see thy Creatures met together to give thee Worship, who art the Lord of all.

But then, O Lord, I beg thy Grace, that as often as I come into these public Assemblies, it may be with such inward Dispositions of Soul as may fit me for the Duties of such a Meeting, in giving Glory to thy holy Name, and seeking thy Mercy both for myself and all others that want it. Grant therefore, I beseech thee, O merciful Lord, that I may not go out of Custom only, and without thinking, or because it is expected; but that I may ever propose thy Glory, and the satisfying that Duty to which thy Goodness has obliged me. And this, O God, may I perform with an humble Mind, with a fervent Spirit, with a Soul raised to thee; zealous for thy Glory, confiding in thy Mercies, and thirsting after the Possession of thee, its only and everlasting Good.

For this End vouchsafe me, O Lord, thy Grace, that, being in thy Presence, I may be watchful over myself, that I give no Offence to any, but do all to Edification. Suffer me not, I beseech thee, to carry any Vanity with me, nor do any thing to draw the Eyes of others upon me; let it be my only Desire, when I come before thee, to be seen and heard by thee alone, my God. May my Heart and Desires be fixed only on thee; and let this inward Steadiness keep my Eyes from all Gazing; for what have I to do with Creatures when I present myself a Petitioner to thee?

Let a like Guard be on my Lips, that in the House of Prayer I may speak to none but thee, my Lord. Far be then from me all vain, sinful, worldly, or unprofitable Discourse. Let my whole Behaviour be composed, reserved, and modest; shewing no Favour to Sloth,

Sloth, nor seeking Ease, but attended with the Humility of a Petitioner, and a Reverence becoming the Majesty of thee, my God. Let nothing I do there be tainted with Hypocrisy, Vain-glory, or any human Respect; for this I know must be an Affront to thee, and a great Prejudice to my Soul, to seek my own Glory in thy House, and where I pretend to glorify thee.

But above all, I beseech thee to strengthen my Soul, at this Time, against all sinful Passions. Deliver me from all evil Suggestions; and if any for my Trial occur, let thy holy Grace be my Defence, so as to secure me against the Malice of them. O God, possess my Soul with an Abhorrence of all those Looks, Words, or Motions, which can be suspected of Lightness, and therefore are not only unbecoming, but must likewise give Scandal to as many as observe them. For if at such a Time, and in such a Place, I so far yield to my own wicked Passions, as openly to encourage to concur in what is sinful, what must I expect from thy Hand but the severest of Judgements, whilst I sacrilegiously profane thy House, insolently affront thee to thy Face, and am actually in the Devil's Service while I pretend to worship thee? Preserve me, O God, I beseech thee, from such Abomination, and let the Fear of thy Judgements keep me from taking Part in their Sins, who make the Worship of Christians more provoking than the Idolatry of Heathens.

Besides the public Worship, help me, O merciful God, in the due Performance of all other Exercises which are proper for sanctifying the Day. Give me Grace not only to be attentive, but likewise to improve whatever Instructions I shall hear. Let me not be drawn away by Curiosity, nor by Affection, nor the Ear, nor despise good Doctrine upon Dislike of the Deliverer; but let thy Word, like good Seed, whoever the Sower be, take deep Root in my Soul, and bring forth Fruit an hundred Fold. I cannot hope for this good Effect but through the Help of thy Grace, by which my Heart must be prepared both for receiving and retaining what is good. Prepare then my Heart,

Heart, O God, I beseech thee, that I may receive the Benefit of whatever I hear.

I petition likewise, O God, for thy Grace, that on this Day I may not only read, but likewise take Delight in reading such Books as may be for my Instruction, or otherwise a Help to me, in order to my eternal Good. I am sensible how much my Soul stands in need of such Helps, and therefore beg of thee that neither Sloth, nor any Dislike of such Entertainment, may deprive me of this Food and Light of my Soul.

Let thy Grace likewise direct me, to employ this Day in such other Exercises as may be for my spiritual Good. May thy Grace take me from Company, unprofitable Conversation, &c. and lead me to my Closet, there in private to converse with thee, my God, in Prayer: There to engage thy Goodness to my Assistance, and to obtain whatever Light and Strength I want for overcoming myself and the World, and living up to the Rules of the Gospel.

By the same Guide may I be prevailed on, in some Retirement to consider the State of my Soul, and examining into the common Method of my Life, see whether the Commandments of God and the Gospel are the Rule by which I endeavour to live; or whether Vice, Passion, Interest, Idleness, Self-love, or the World carry me on in such Ways, Practices, and Customs as are not consistent with the Rule I profess to follow.

By the same Guide may I be directed, instead of idle Company or Visits, to seek a Conference with such an one, whose Virtue, Piety and Charity may qualify him for being a Help to me. I know how easy I am in deceiving myself; how blind in not discerning many Snares which my own Corruption, the Devil, and the World lay for me; how rash in going on in dangerous Ways, and presuming many Things to be harmless and warrantable, which are not. Being thus unsafe under my own Conduct, I think nothing can be more for my Advantage than to lay open the State of my Life, and confer with such a Person, who is both capable of discerning my false Steps, and giving me Advice, how I may

may walk in safer Ways. And how much more to the Purpose, O God, is this, than to waste this sacred Time in Idleness? Grant, therefore, I beseech thee, that on a Day, which thou hast commanded to be sanctified, I may take such Methods, as may be most proper for my Sanctification.

Let the same Grace likewise direct me, to make my Peace with thee: So that, as often as this Day returns, I may make this one Business of the Day, to consider my Sins and to repent of them. My Sins are the only Bars that divide me from thee, my God, and put me in Danger of being eternally separated. What therefore can I better do, on this Day set apart for Heaven, but thus labour in removing these Obstacles, and, by true Contrition, endeavour to prepare my Soul for that Place of eternal Rest; that so, whatever Week is to be my last, and in which I am to be summoned to give an Account, I may not be found unprepared.

By the Power of the same Grace may I be led to other such pious Exercises, as may be most acceptable to thee, in order to my future Good. Thou hast manifested thy Acceptance of all Works of Mercy; of visiting the Sick, comforting the Poor and Afflicted, instructing the Ignorant, relieving the Distressed, &c. And I cannot deny, but some of these Objects I might find every *Sunday* in the Year. Grant then, O God, that I may be so true to my own best Interest, and to the Design of this thy Ordinance, as to withdraw myself, on this Day, from whatever can be censured as unprofitable, and that, in these better Exercises, I may seek thy Favour, and help to sanctify the Day. How many Hours have I wasted unprofitably! May I now for the future be solicitous to employ them better.

Mercifully give Ear, O Lord, I beseech thee, to these my Petitions; and vouchsafe to grant my Requests, for, behold I find my Soul in great Disorder, and subject to many Weaknesses, such as require both thy holy Grace, and my stricter Care for their Amendment. How little do I know, what it is to love thee? How am I bent upon worldly Things, and how little concerned for what is eternal! I am eager in every

Thing that is to please myself : But how slothful and dull in all the Exercises that are for my spiritual Good ? How do I make the World my Rule, while I pretend follow the Gospel ? How little is the Sense I have of all thy Mercies ? And how unworthily do I abuse thy manifold Blessings ? How great is the Number of my Sins ; and, while I often pretend to repent, how little do I amend ? Nay, whether I have ever truly repented of any one Sin, is only known to thee, O God.

While thus stands the State of my Soul (beside the Foulness of my greater Crimes) how unhappy must I be, if by the Help of thy Grace, I do not make a good Use of Days which thou hast sanctified ? For it is on these Days, Thou in a particular Manner callest upon me ; Thou puttest me in Mind of the eternal Sabbath, of resting with thee in thy Kingdom ; Thou encouragest me to prepare for it, and givest me Opportunities both of considering my State, and of engaging thy infinite Goodness to my Assistance for overcoming whatever Difficulties stand in my Way. Now, this being thy Mercy towards me, what Hopes can I have, if I neglect this Mercy ; If, having so much to do on these Days, I let them slip away, and, instead of complying with the Design of thy Goodness, waste them either sinfully or unprofitably ; so that the Difficulties of my Salvation are even then increased, when they ought to be diminished, and, when I am called upon to prepare for Heaven, I then depart at a yet greater Distance from it ?

Wherefore now, O God, I beseech thee, to have Mercy on me, and give me Grace to be serious in a Matter of this great Concern. I own thy great Mercy in the Institution of this Day ; I own the great Interest I have in observing it, and that no less than my Eternity depends upon it. Grant therefore, most gracious Lord, that I may no more prophane this Day by any Thing that is sinful, nor abuse it through Sloth, nor neglect it through Indifference ; but that I may be faithful in performing all the Duties of it, and wise in making all that Advantage which thou hast designed for the Good of my Soul. May I make it my Business, on this Day, to study the Way to Heaven, and

to advance in it : May I learn to know myself, and see whether I use sufficient Means for overcoming that Corruption which puts me out of the Way of Heaven. And since this Day is an Emblem of the everlasting Rest in thy Kingdom, may I, on this Day, endeavour to withdraw my Heart from the World, and, by exercising it in Adoration and Love, labour to be united to thee, with whom I desire to be united for ever. Amen.

Good Use of Time.

I Believe, O Lord, that I was not created for this World, but for a better; that I am to enter into Eternity, and that the Time and Being, I have in this World, is granted me; to prepare for that everlasting State which is to come. This is my Faith, and I now implore thy Grace, that my Faith may be manifested in the Method of my Life, that I may live so here as one that earnestly desires and strongly hopes to have a happy Eternity.

According to this Faith, I confess, O Lord, there can be nothing more unreasonable than to pass through this Life without providing for the next. For, what is this Life, in Comparison of Eternity? It is not so much as one Drop to the Ocean; it is but a Moment; it is Nothing. Eternity is an everlasting Being which can never end; when ten thousand, and ten hundred thousand Years are past, Eternity is still the same, it is all yet to come. But as for this Life, a few Years certainly end it; a few Days may conclude it; and there is no Certainty of one Moment beyond the present. If there be this Difference, so there ought to be in the Care of providing for them; and it is not only unreasonable, but even Madness to be solicitous for this Life, without making due Provision for the next.

Preserve me, O God, I beseech thee, from this strange Blindness; and, since it has been thy Mercy to me, to grant me Reason and *Faith*, extend now this Mercy to me, and vouchsafe me thy Grace, that, having the Help of these two great Lights, I may not stifle them both, but be wholly directed by them; and

particularly in this Point of letting Eternity have the best Part of my Care, and being more solicitous for an everlasting Well-being, than for that which passes like a Dream, and lasts only for a Moment.

What if I had all I can desire in this Life? What an imperfect Happiness would this be; when every Day passing would inform me, that my Life passed with it; when the Death of every Acquaintance would tell me, that I had nothing certain in all my Enjoyments; that my Hour would likewise come, when I should be torn from all whatever I admired; that I should never more return, but enter into Eternity, where, giving an Account of my Life, I should receive the Punishment due to my Sins, and, for my Contempt of God, become the everlasting Scorn of Devils!

I know my Hour is already appointed; the Sentence of Death is passed upon me, and the very Moment fixed, in which it shall be certainly executed without Reprieve. What then is my present Life, but the Life of one, who is sentenced to die? And while I am every Day hastening on towards Death, what can all my present Happiness be, but like the Satisfaction of condemned Persons on their Way to Execution? And is this a Happiness for which Eternity is to be neglected, or that by reasonable Creatures can be put in the Balance against everlasting Bliss?

Permit me not, O God, I beseech thee, to fall under the Folly and Guilt of this Stupidity; but grant, that being placed here in this World, to prepare for the World to come, I may study, contrive, and labour for the Happiness of the next Life, and not do any Thing here, for which I shall be in Hazard of being excluded from it.

For this End, I beg of thee, most merciful God, to deliver me from a lazy, slothful, and idle Life: For I know the Work of Eternity cannot go on, while I am doing nothing, and whatever Time I give to Sloth is so much taken away from my greater Concern. I confess the working out my Salvation is not an easy Task, and I have many Things to do, which require both Consideration, Labour, and Time; and, if they be

be not done, I have too much Reason to fear a Mis-carriage. What a strange Indiscretion then must it be to let the present Time be wasted in Sloth, and defer the Work of Eternity to another Time, which I know not, whether I shall ever have, or, if I have it, whether I shall be in Circumstances of making Use of it or not.

There is not any Part of Time given to Idleness, but what might be employed for the Service of Eternity; I might be praying, reading, taking Care of inspecting, or labouring in the Busines of my State: I might be improving myself or others; I might be resisting Idle-ness, at least; which would be a great Help in all that concerns Eternity. Grant then, O God, that I may not yield to this unhappy Inclination, and lie quite still, doing nothing, when I have so much to do.

Ah, wretched Soul! look upon thyself and see, whether thou art fit to enter into Eternity, if God should summon thee out of this World, now at this Moment. Is thy Peace made with God? Hast thou repented of all thy past Sins? Hast thou repented from thy Heart? Art not thou yet subject to some sinful Practices? Are there not yet some criminal Passions in thee, not yet subdued? Is thy Heart disengaged from the World, from all its Busines, Interest, and Flatterers, so that thou couldst now at this Moment leave it? Dost thou love God above all Things? Is it thy constant Practice to renounce thy own Inclinations, and to forsake Company, as often as these lead thee contrary to the known Will of God, and put thee in Danger of offending him? Dost thou despise the World with all its Greatnes and Pleasures? Dost thou esteem them Vanity, and hast thou a Desire of coming to the Possession of God, as thy only Good? Dost thou do all thy Duty belonging to this World? Is there nothing under thy Care that suffers through thy Neglect, ill Management, and Want of being more industrious?

Speak now the Truth, and dissemble not? Upon this short Enquiry, dost not thou see thyself at present unprepared for entering into Eternity, and that thou hast yet, much to do? And is this a Time then for lying still, for spending thy Hours in Sleep and Drowsiness,

for sitting with thy Arms crossed, and letting vain Amusements consume both thy Time and Thoughts? Is this a Time for wasting thy Days in idle Entertainments, in wandering about, like one that is at a Loss for Want of something to do?

God knows thy many Sins, and the great Corruptions to which thou art subject; he knows them, and grants thee this present Time, that in it thou mayest take Pains in overcoming all Evil, and put thyself in a better State. This is his Mercy, that at the Hour of Death thou mayest not be found unprepared for leaving this World, and taking Possession of a better. And is this a Time, wherein thou, who art a reasonable Creature, and a Christian, canst think thou hast nothing to do? Is this a Time for thee to throw away idly, and even to study, how thou mayest find something unprofitable, wherein to waste it? God mercifully providing Time, wherein thou mayest work out thy Salvation; and thou, who art the Person most concerned, contriving how to lose it!

Ah, my God; I see my Folly; and I know it must be a great Provocation to thee, to see thy Goodness thus abused. Thy Goodness waits for my Amendment, and what do I, but by my incredible Neglect, treasure up to myself Anger in the Day of Wrath? But since thy Grace, O God, now touches my Heart, and gives me a Glimpse of my own Unhappiness, grant, that for the Time to come, I may take a better Method; grant I may often reflect on thy Mercy towards me, in the Time thou givest me here on Earth; grant I may often think of the great and difficult Work I have to do; and likewise contrive how to labour in it, and carry it on every Day of my Life.

For this End, I now most humbly ask thy Grace, that I may resolutely withstand all Inclinations to Laziness; that I may shake off all Sloth and Heaviness, with every Oppression that weighs upon my Spirit. Quicken me, I beseech thee, and give me new Life, that, having the Work of Eternity upon my Hands, I may be industrious in it; and every Day do something that may set it forward. For Sloth, I know, is
a great

a great Temptation, and the Devil needs lay no other Snare for those who favour a lazy and idle Temper; for this alone overthrows the best Purposes that can be made; and prepares the Way for infinite Sins. Help me therefore, O God, and by thy Power deliver me from this evil Spirit, which, seeming innocent, opens the Heart to the foulest of Devils.

Hear me, O merciful Lord, and receive the Petition I now make thee. For I see so much of Blindness, Unreasonableness, Stupidity, and Madness, in being thus slothful, when everlasting Happiness is yet to be gained, that I cannot expect thy Grace or Blessing as long as I indulge myself in this unhappy Inclination. For how can thy Mercy, O God, extend to those, who, having Heaven offered to them at so easy a Rate, are not yet willing to take the Pains for it; who having a few Years to labour in, and an Eternity wherein to rest, accept ~~not~~ this Condition of Mercy, but, inverting thy Order, seek Rest here, without any Solitude for the Eternity that is to follow.

When I consider thy only Son, and the Example he has set before us, I see no Encouragement given to slothful Christians. For what was his whole Life, but a Life of Labour, a Life of continual Application, in seeking the lost Sheep, in teaching the Way of Salvation, in relieving the Distressed, in comforting repenting Sinners, in reproaching the Obstinate, in awaking the Slothful, in fasting, in spending whole Nights in Prayer, in suffering all Manner of Injuries, both in his good Name, in his Person, in his Doctrine, in his Life! This was what he chose, not only for rescuing us from the Power of Death, as a Redeemer, but likewise for our Instruction and Example as a Master and Leader; commanding all to learn of him, and by his Apostle informing all his Followers, that the Life of Christ ought to be manifested in them, and to work out their Salvation in Fear and Trembling.

Here now is Encouragement, and even a Command for Christians to labour in the Work of Salvation, and Promises enough are made to those who do so. But where is the Hope or Encouragement for those who

are slothful? Christ shewed such Love for the Salvation of Man, and esteemed it so valuable, that for this End he subjected himself to so painful and laborious a Life, to so cruel, ignominious, and tormenting a Death: But thou, Christian, who wastest thy Life in Idleness, and wilt not take Pains in working out thy own Salvation; whose Disciple art thou, and where are thy Hopes; if thou takest no Part with him, how canst thou expect to have any Part in him?

Christ sought no Rest for himself, and purposely declined all those Ways, by which Softness, Self-love, and Ease are indulged; and all his Life was divided between the Labours of Justice, Charity, Humility, and Patience. But thou, Christian, who art not only averse to all such Labours, but likewise in Favour of Inclination, dost purposely decline them; thou, who studiest thy own Ease, who art wholly under the Conduct of Sloth and Self-love, who turnest all the Blessings of God, thy Thoughts, thy Health, thy Time, thy Money, to the Support of this thy Corruption; thou, Christian, who dost this, whose Disciple art thou? Where canst thou ground thy Hope of reigning with Christ in Glory, who wilt not join with him in his Labours, or walk in the Way he has taught, both by his Doctrines and Example?

The Case is very plain, that Christ has promised to welcome those into his eternal Joys, who are careful to prepare for his coming, who provide against that Time, and are found watching; and for this End he gives a strict Charge to all his Followers, to be ever watching. And is not the Case as clear, what shall be their Doom, who give themselves to Sleep and Sloth, when they should be providing Oil in their Lamps; and, for Want of being more watchful, are found unprepared at the Coming of the Spouse? The Gate is shut against them, and Christ knows them not. O God, deliver me in thy Mercy from this Unhappiness. I confess thou hast given Hopes of Bliss to such as are careful in the great Concern of Eternity. But as for others, if they have Hopes of Mercy, it is what thou hast never promised. May my Hope, O God, be ever such as is built on thy Promises!

It

It is plain again, that the Servant who industriously employed to his Master's Advantage the Talents received from him, found the bountiful Reward of his Labour and Care. As likewise that the Tree which brought forth Fruit, was commended by the Lord, and permitted to grow in his Vineyard. But what becomes of the Servant, who made no Use of his Talent? And what of the Tree which brought forth no Fruit? The one is cast forth with the Character of an unprofitable Servant, into utter Darkness; and the other is cut down and commanded to be thrown into the Fire.

Under these Parables, O God, thou manifestest thy Judgements, and discoverest to thy Servants how they may escape them. Thou shewest to me the Recompence of an industrious and laborious Spirit, and callest upon me to be afraid of Sloth, which is with such Rigour judged by thee. Possess my Soul, O God, with the lively Remembrance of this important Truth: May the Knowledge of thy Judgements chase from my Heart all Oppression and Heaviness; and may I have the same Horror of an idle Life, as of Hell. If I make not a good Use of the Talents and Blessings, and improve them not in my Master's Service, my Lot is already cast; for the unprofitable Servant is already condemned. If I live an idle Life, and bring not forth Fruit of what I have received, Sentence is already pronounced in the barren Tree. O God give me now the Grace of an active Spirit, that I may study how to make Use of thy Blessings, and particularly of my Time, that I may be found bringing forth Fruit, and be transplanted hence into thy heavenly Vineyard. I have great Reason to press this Petition to thee; again, O God, because I see the Evidence of thy Judgements, even in this Life, upon those who, prodigal of their Time, let it be consumed by Sloth and Idleness. For how great Numbers do I find of these following very unchristian Ways, engaged in Variety of Extravagancies laughing at Religion, fond of atheistical and profane Company, without Discipline, Admirers of all that is vain and prodigal, and living on so unmindful of thee, and forgetful of Eternity, as if

they were wholly cast off by thee, and given up to a reprobate Sense? A long Train of Evils are so generally the Attendants of an idle Life, that I cannot but fear this to be their Case; and therefore knowing how much this is to be dreaded, I implore thy holy Grace for my Protection, beseeching thee so to increase this Dread, that I may be afraid of all Inclinations to Sloth, and be as solicitous to cast them off as the foulest of all Temptations. For have not I Reason to fear, when I see myself running into the Way where so many perish; where Persons are no sooner entered, but they become blind and senseless, as to the Apprehension of Danger, bold in despising what they apprehend, and making little other Use of their Reason, but finding Reasons to deceive themselves, and for going on without Scruple in such Ways as cannot be warranted any longer than they are their own Judges? Deliver me therefore, I beseech thee, O God, from this unhappy State.

For how can it be otherwise, than unhappy, amidst the infinite Difficulties and Dangers of this Life, which are so very great, that the most watchful, industrious, and solicitous Christians overcome them not, but with frequent Hazards of being overcome by them? And what then must become of those that are slothful and idle? Are not those most likely to perish, where the others hardly escape? I confess, O God, that Nature and the World are so very corrupt, and the Devil is so maliciously industrious, that it requires a continual Watchfulness to stand against them, and whoever stands not thus, must, without a Miracle, become a Prey to them. Grant therefore, O God, that I may be ever upon the Guard, as the unhappy Circumstances of this Life require: Grant I may be ever solicitous to procure thy Assurances for my Security; and mercifully preserve me from yielding to the Inclinations of Carelessness, Idleness, and Sloth: For while these help considerably to encrease the Dangers of my State, expose me more to them, and provoke thee to withdraw thy Help from me; what must my Condition be, but full of Despair, if by Grace I am not delivered from these Evils.

Deliver

Deliver me therefore, O God, and give me that Grace, by which I may be taught and helped to make a good Use of my Time: Permit me no more to consume it sinfully, or waste it unprofitably; but since Heaven is to be purchased by it, teach me, I beseech thee, so to employ it, that whether I work, read, think, eat, drink, sleep, or divert myself, it may be all so ordered, as to be acceptable to thee, and advance me on to that last End, for which I was created.

Let my Conscience always lie under this Conviction; that Idleness is either sinful or dangerous, and so unbecoming a Christian, that I ought to think it a Reproach, to be so found: And therefore that I ought to be employed: And for my Employment, O God, grant, that I be ever diligent in that which belongs to my State. If Necessity obliges me to none, I beg thy Direction, that Discretion may; that so I may never be idle.

As for my Employment, may it be always in a lawful Way. Let thy Grace always direct me, to undertake it in thy Name, O God; may I begin it in Obedience to thy holy Will, and make a continual Offering of it to thy Glory; that so it may not be only an Employment of my Time, and contribute to my worldly Interest, but likewise to my eternal Welfare.

As for Divertisements; may thy holy Grace direct me, to go so far, as shall be necessary for Health, or for giving due Release to tired Spirits. So far, O God, they are permitted by thee, and may be undertaken in Obedience to thy holy Will, and become an acceptable Offering. But then, O God, I most humbly beseech thee, suffer me not to make Divertisements the Business of the Day, and much less of my Life. Thou hast engaged me in a noble Work, even the gaining of Heaven, and hast made it my greatest Interest to be industrious in it; and, while I have Heaven to gain, can it be reasonable for me to play away Life? The Work I have undertaken is to be carried on in the Middle of a corrupt World; it requires great Watchfulness, continual Care, Labour, and Self-denials; and, for Want of these, the far greater Number miscarry, and perish for ever;

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while so many fall on each Side of me, and are lost eternally, for Want of being more careful, can it be reasonable in me, to lay aside Care and spend my Life in Idleness? Suffer me not, O God, to live on unconcerned, under the Guilt of this Folly.

But grant that I may be moderate in Recreation, and avoid all Excess; and not only avoid it, but be always jealous of myself, for fear of being insensibly drawn into more than becomes a Christian, the great Loss of that Time, which thou hast given me for better Ends, and, when once gone, can never be recovered by all whatever the World can do.

Grant likewise, that I may not delight, or seek to divert myself in such Ways, as either become not my State, or put me in Danger of Sin. In this Point I beseech thee, O God, to give me Discretion, and to direct me every Day, by thy holy Spirit; for I confess my Weakness and Oversight to be such, that I have nothing in myself to trust to. Help me therefore here, and let no Indiscretion or Passion prevail upon me, to engage me in any Thing that is either sinful or unbecoming. Let me do nothing that may be a Snare to me, or be the Occasion of living in the Neglect of that Discipline, which is one of the greatest Helps in a Christian Life.

As for my Thoughts, I beseech thee, O God, that whatever Time is given to these, it may be in turning my Heart towards thee, in seeking, loving, or praising thee, or in such other Considerations as my spiritual or temporal Concerns may require; all these may be in order to my last End, and therefore grateful to thee. But against all other Thoughts, O God, be thou my Protection. Protect me therefore, I beseech thee, against all sinful Thoughts, against all the Workings and Contrivances of any Passion or immoderate Affection: Against all Thoughts of Resentments and Revenge; against all vain Jealousies and Suspicions; against all Thoughts of immoderate Grief, or melancholy and unreasonable Fears; against all romantick Thoughts, impertinent Amusements, and imaginary Delusions. Against these and whatever others there are, sinful, dangerous, or vain, O God, be thou my Protector; give me Grace to be ever sensible of their Vanity,

Vanity, that I may never indulge or give them the least Encouragement. May I be ever mindful, that all such Thoughts steal away that Time, which might be better employed, even in gaining Eternity, and hence reject them with Indignation, as an Entertainment unworthy of those, who have the Work of Eternity on their Hand, demanding their Consideration and most serious Thoughts. Hear me, O most merciful Lord, and let me no more prodigally throw away that Time upon Impertinencies and Sin, which thou hast given me for a better End, and in which, if I do not employ it, I shall certainly be called to an Account for the Abuse of so considerable a Talent.

Wherefore, I now most humbly petition for thy Grace, O most gracious Lord, that, instead of losing, I may now learn to redeem the Time; it is too much I have already lost. How much, O God, how much have I lost in Sin? How much in Vanity, Curiosity, and Folly? How much in unprofitable Conversation? How much has Sloth, Idleness, and unnecessary Sleep stolen away? How much has been cast away in doing and thinking of nothing? Thus, O God, have I prodigally wasted my Time, and carelessly thrown it away, as if I had a Stock of it at Command, or had no better Use to which to put it.

But for all this ill Management, I now humble myself before thee, I confess my Sin, and beseech thee, in thy infinite Mercy to forgive it. I see my great Folly, and here acknowledge it with Sorrow, Shame, and Confusion, and now beg thy heavenly Assistance, that I may endeavour, in all Ways, to redeem my Time. Grant I may seek in all Things to do thy holy Will, live always in thy Presence, fear Sin, and all the Dangers of it, and every Day to make it my particular Concern, to employ my Time in such a Way, not as Inclination, or Nature suggests, but as seems most conformable to thy Law, most honourable to thee, beneficial to my own Soul, and is capable of being accepted by thee in order to my eternal Good. Thus, O God, may I employ the Time that remains of my Life, and make it serviceable to Eternity, that so I may never come to that unhappy State of cursing myself with

with everlasting Woes for my Folly, in abusing that short Time which was granted me for working out my Salvation.

Keep Peace with All.

I Here make my Profession before thee, O God, that I believe thee to be a Lover of Peace; that thou hast commanded all to keep Peace with every Neighbour; and that as thou hast threatened those with thy severest Judgements who live in Strife and Dissension; so thou hast encouraged those, who make and live in Peace, with the Promise of the greatest Blessings.

This, I believe, and hence know what my Duty is; but, O God, I must own my Weakness too, that though Duty and Interest pres strongly upon me, yet I very often fail in this Point, and a little Occasion is enough to carry me against all I know, so that I am often engaged in Dissension, where thou commandest Peace to be kept.

For the many Times I have offended in this Way, I now, with all Humility, implore thy Mercy; appealing to thy infinite Goodness, for the Forgiveness of my Sins, whereby I have disturbed my own and my Neighbour's Peace, given Scandal to others, and broken that Bond of Charity, which thou hast commanded should be kept inviolable amongst Christians. All these my Iniquities, I beseech thee now to forgive, and in a particular Manner to establish me so in thy Grace, that I may choose rather to submit to the greatest Inconvenience, than offend against that Precept, wherein my eternal Interest is so much concerned.

This Grace of Peace I have Reason to ask, because I see the Strictness of thy Precept wherein thou commandest it, and the particular Manner in which thou enjoined it. Thou hast made it to be the Mark of thy Disciples, to live in Peace and Love; for thus thou hast declared it; *by this shall all Men know, that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.* O blessed Jesus, since thou hast made this Declaration, there is no Place left to doubt; I must either keep Peace, or not pretend to be thy Disciple. Help me therefore, O blessed Redeemer,

Redeemer, and, amidst all the Difficulties of Nature, let me still be mindful of the Terms upon which I stand. Let me suffer all, rather than lose the Character of being thy Disciple.

Thou hast again given this Command to all thy Followers; *follow Peace with all Men, and Holiness:* And it ought to be enough for me, that thou hast commanded it; for what else is my Profession, but to know thy Will and do it? But, when I see thy Precept of keeping Peace, backed with this following Threat; *follow Peace with all Men, and Holiness, without which no Man shall see the Lord;* what shall I do here but stand in Surprize, and tremble at my own Weakness and Madness, who, upon such trivial Occasions, offend against this Command, as if there were nothing depending on it? Ah, my God, give me a greater Sense of my Duty, and a more lively Apprehension of thy Threats, that what thou judgest so severely, I may not pass by so lightly.. Let the Sentence here pronounced be always in my Mind, that I may have a Dread upon me of all Quarrels, Strife, and Dissention; and that, in all the Occasions of them, I may rather choose to let them go in Silence, than by yielding to my Passion, break that Peace on which my Eternity so much depends.

Thou hast again, by the Apostle, informed us, that *Variance, Wrath, and Strife are Works of the Flesh;* and that those *who do such Things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* In these plain Terms is thy holy Will declared to us; and thou hast mercifully let us know how detestable these Sins are to thee, and how pernicious to the Sinner. And what then must I do? Am I now to follow the Inclination of my Nature, hearken to the Suggestions of my Temper or Passion, as a Heathen would do, when he is provoked: Or, must I be directed by thee, and, in my Obedience, shew that I have a Faith in thy Words? O God, the Case is evident what I ought to do; and, I fear, it is as plain what I have done; that I have as easily fallen into Passion, and upon as light Occasions, broken Peace with my Neighbour, as if I had no Knowledge of its being forbidden by thee, and were not all awed by thy Threats.

But

But now, O God of Mercy, I beseech thee to hear thy Servant, and grant me a better Spirit, that I may in all Things be directed by thy Law; that thy Will may be the Rule of my Life. And particularly, in this Point, that I may be careful to avoid all those Evils upon which thou hast set such a Mark of thy Displeasure. Thou hast said it, *Variance, Wrath and Strife*, exclude from the Kingdom of Heaven: Grant therefore, that I may be ever watchful against the Guilt of these Sins, and be as fearful of all the Occasions of them, as of the soulest Crimes. For, what more can there be in the worst of Sins, than to divide Souls from God, and shut them out from the Kingdom of Heaven.

But why do I pray to be delivered from these Sins? I know this Prayer is vain, if I do not make it my most serious Study to examine what the Meekness, what the Patience, what the Humility of a Christian ought to be; and what is the Spirit by which he ought to live. This, therefore, O God, I desire to learn. Teach me, I beseech thee, this Lesson, that while I pray to be delivered from the Guilt of these common, but great Sins, I may be truly in earnest, and omit nothing that is necessary for obtaining what I ask. Speak therefore, O merciful Lord, to thy Servant; for I truly desire to be taught by thee.

Walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called, with all Lowliness, and Meekness, with long Suffering, forbearing one another in Love: Endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace. (Ephes. 4. 1, 2, 3.) I hear these thy sacred Words, O God, and these are so many Commands to me, not to let Pride or Passion work in me, but even then to be meek and humble when others give me Provocations to Anger; to suffer, what I think injurious to me, and not only to suffer but even with Long-suffering; and in Silence to forbear, when inward Disturbance pushes me on to lay open the Wrong in hard Words, and to justify myself in Passion: This is the Spirit which, by thy Command, ought to govern in me, This Meekness, Patience, and Silence are according to the Vocation to which I am called; but, O God, how unlike is my Practice

Practice to this ? Help me, O blessed Redeemer, and give me both Grace and Strength, that I may not only profess in Words, but live according to thy Gospel.

Walk honestly, as in the Day — not in Strife and Envyng, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 13, 13.) Here again, I have thy Command, O God, to avoid all Contention and Strife, and so to check all Kinds of Envy, as not to let this break forth into any biting or provoking Expression. Grant, O merciful Lord, I may do thus, for certainly this has not been hitherto my Rule : How easily have I been engaged in Strife ; upon how slight Occasions have I been drawn into it, when a little Patience, a little Silence; a little Discretion might have prevented it? And how often has Envy made me open my Teeth against my Neighbour ? Ah, my God, I have lived many Years under the Profession of being thy Servant, without doing thy Will, or even knowing what it was. How long shall I thus go on ? Be merciful now to me, and, by the Strength of thy Grace, take me out of the Ways of this Corruption, lead me on in the Ways of Peace, and, having put off the Old Man, help me to put on our Lord Jesus Christ.

Where Envyng and Strife is, there is Confusion and every evil Work: But the Wisdom, that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy. (Jam. 3, 14.) Grant, O merciful Father, I may live in the Practice of this Lesson ; that I may not be harsh, passionate, exceptionis, or easily provoked ; for this is the Way to Strife, and Strife is followed by Confusion, and every evil Work. So it is Lord, I own and feel this Truth ; for, as often as I am engaged in Strife, my Soul is in Confusion ; I am fit for no Part of my Duty, and I both speak and do such Things as a Christian ought to be ashamed of ; discovering too plainly, that, while Passion governs, I neither love thee, my God, nor fear thee ; I have no Regard either to thy Commands or thy Threats : Hence it is made evident to me, what thy Apostle here teaches ; that Bitterness, Envyng, and Strife are not the Wisdom which descends from Above, but are earthly, sensual, devilish,

Devilish; for so I find it by the ill Effects they work in my Soul, in shutting out Reason and Faith, making me deaf to all that is for my Good; and opening my Understanding to nothing but what is sinful. O God, may I follow no more this Wisdom, which, being from the Devil, cannot lead to thee, who alone art my present and everlasting Good.

Rather, O blessed Redeemer, let me, for the future follow the Wisdom that is from above. Teach me to be gentle in my Behaviour, meek in my Words, mild in my Voice, peaceable in my Answers. Fill me with Compassion towards all; that, whenever Passion disturbs them, I may pity their Weakness, be troubled at their Sin, and, by all the Means of Moderation, Sweetness, and Mercy, endeavour to restore them to Peace. This is the Wisdom of Heaven, even that which thou, blessed Jesus, didst practise upon Earth; may this be my Rule, and so impartially towards all, that no Disaffection, Dislike, or Ill-will, may ever so prevail in me as to transgress it. In this Method of Peace may this infirm Member be united to thee its Head.

Haye Compassion one of another; Love as Brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering Evil for Evil, or Railing for Railing; but contrariwise, Blessing; knowing, that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a Blessing. (1, Pet. 3. 8, 9.) Thus, O God, thou teachest me the Way to Peace; and how shall I find Peace if I observe not what thou teachest? Hear then, my Soul, what the Lord says to thee. When others injure thee, and thou sufferest Evil from them, thy Lord letest thee know his Will, that, in this Case, thou art not to render Evil for Evil. And if others, in reviling and angry Words, express their Passion against thee, that, in this Case, thou art not to render Railing for Railing. However Nature therefore be provoked, and seems to swell with Gall, however common Practice encourages thee to resent the Wrong, yet thy Lord commands thee to suppress thy Passion, and not only to be patient, but even to bless those who are railing at thee, and, by this Practice of heavenly Charity, to prevent Dissension, and keep Peace. Nay, he not only commands

commands this, but likewise declares, that this is the very Thing to which thou art called ; it is thy Profession to do thus, and the Means by which thou art to come to the Inheritance of an eternal Blessing.

Dost thou hear now, my Soul, what thy Lord says to thee ? My God, I hear it, and am surprized at myself to see how little my Life is conformed to thy Law, or rather, how contrary I live to it. For, is it not strange that, after thou hast manifested thy Will to us in such plain Terms, and annexed unspeakable Blessings to the fulfilling thy Commands, I still hearken to Nature, and am carried away by my Passion, contrary to all thou hast said, as much as if I had no Interest in obeying thee, and were to be no Loser by despising thy Commands.

O God, I am ashamed, and quite confounded at my Contempt of thy Law; and, in this Confusion of Spirit, I now humble myself before thee, in Acknowledgement of all these my Sins, and beseech thee, my heavenly Father, to forgive them, and so to strengthen me by thy Grace, that, whenever I am provoked by others, either by Words or Actions, I may stifle in myself all the Motions of Nature, may resist all Passion, and, instead of being governed by these, may follow the Rules thou hast given me, and strive to overcome by the Arms thou puttest into my Hands, by Moderation, Meekness, Patience, Silence, and doing Good for Evil.

This I most earnestly beg of thee, because I see the Madness of hearkening to my own Passions, when I have thee to teach me what I am to do. I know Passion is blind and unreasonable. I know it is the Effect of Impatience, and, in itself, is a great Weakness of Mind : I know it leads to Confusion, and insensibly draws me into many Sins : This I know by a long Experience. And is it not a strange Stupidity, that, as often as it appears, I presently take this for my Counsel and Guide ? I give Ear to it, I follow it, and think nothing more reasonable than to do what it advises : And this when I know it to be contrary to what thou, my God, not only teachest, but likewise commandest me to do.

And what is it I do less in this than reject thee and
thy

thy Gospel, and follow false Gods, not as the Heathens, made of Wood or Silver, the Work of their own Hands, but made up of Blindness, Violence, Corruption, and Sin ; these I choose before thee, my God, and, at the Time, think I have Reason to do so. And is not this an Infidelity I have Reason to lament, and, with all the Powers of my Soul, to implore thy Assistance for its Amendment ?

Grant therefore, O God, I beseech thee, that I may for the future, be afraid of Passion as of the worst of Monsters ; and, upon the frequent Experience I have had, judge it as unreasonable to hearken to its Suggestions, as to choose one out of a Mad house for Counsel in Matters of Concern and Difficulty. Grant that, amidst all its Heat and plausible Pretexts, I may remember it to be a Snare and a Cheat ; that it is a Sin, and leads to Variety of Sins ; that I am my own Enemy, if I believe and follow it ; that, whatever I design against others, I shall certainly do myself the greatest Mischief by adhering to it. And, upon this, O God, may I turn to thee ; and knowing thee to be All-wise, all Goodness and Mercy ; that thou knowest what is best to be done, what is best for me, and that what thou advisest is both for my present and everlasting Good ; may I adore thy Goodness, and, renouncing my own Inclinations, embrace what thou teachest, and resolve to follow it, notwithstanding all that Nature, Passion, and the Devil shall suggest to me. And, since thou both teachest and commandest me to seek and keep Peace, by being meek, moderate, humble, and by doing Good to those who treat me ill ; grant, O merciful God, that I may be constant in this Practice, and in this Labour, to give Proof of being thy Disciple.

O God, if by thy helping Grace, I could overcome my own Passion, and do what thou commandest, how happy should I be in the Comforts of a lasting Peace ? What a Calm should I enjoy amidst the greatest Provocations, since if I observe thy Directions, there is no Provocation can be enough for breaking Peace with any Neighbour ? And here, O God, give me Leave to own thy Directions, that I may bless thy Goodness towards

towards me, and that my Conscience may have its Sting as often as I observe them not.

If any one rails at me, thou commandest me not to rail again.

If any one curses me, thou commandest me not to curse again; but to render Blessing for Cursing.

If any one reproaches, or accuses me falsely, thou commandest me to rejoice, and refrain my Tongue from Evil.

If any one does me an Injury, thou commandest me to forgive it.

If any one persecutes me, thou commandest me to pray for him.

If any one does Evil to me, thou commandest me not to render Evil for Evil, but to do Good for Evil.

If any one be contentious, thou commandest me to do nothing in Strife; but all without Murmuring, or Disputing.

If any one be passionate against me, thou commandest me not to avenge myself, but to give Place unto Wrath.

If any one provokes me, thou commandest me to be patient towards all Men; and to put away all Bitterness, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and Evil-speaking.

If any one be uneasy and troublesome, thou commandest me to bear with such, to be compassionate, kind, and tender-hearted.

If any one be my Enemy, thou commandest me to love him, and overcome Evil with Good.

In this Manner thou hast provided, O God, against all Occasions of Strife, so that none can break Peace that observe the Rules thou hast given us. Grant, O most gracious Lord, I may lay these thy Rules in my Heart, that by them I may govern myself as often as I meet with Provocations, or any other Occasions of Disturbance. Let these be the Rule of my Practice, and may my Soul be humbled in Confusion as often as I forsake these and follow my own Passion.. Help me, O God, in this Point, and, as thou hast taught, so may I endeavour to keep Peace.

But, as I ask for Patience, so likewise I now add one Petition

Petition more, and ask for Discretion, that this may help me in keeping Peace. For, as by my unseasonable and indiscreet Words, I unthinkingly lay the Seed of Dissension, and give Occasion to Differences; so likewise I find that, by whispering, and relating to others what has been said of them behind their Backs, I many Times cause great Animosities and Disputes, such as ought not to be amongst Christians. Now, O God, for whatever I have hitherto done in this Kind, I here own the Fault; I own it as a great Indiscretion; I own it as a Sin; I own it as a treacherous Officiousness, which distracts Families and Friends, breaks Peace; undermines Charity; and, too often, makes such deep Impressions as are never afterwards to be removed. But, O merciful Lord, as far as I have thus done foolishly, to my Neighbour's Injury and my own, and offended thee, I now here protest it grieves me from my Heart; I repent of whatever I have done to the Prejudice of Charity and of Peace; and, I beseech thee, in thy infinite Mercy, to forgive me.

But then, grant likewise to thy Servant that Grace of Charity and Discretion, that, for the Time to come, I may better govern my Tongue, that I never let fall any such indiscreet Words as may make any Difference, that, to satisfy the Itch of Tattling, I never speak what Prudence and Charity require to be concealed; that I never concur in making or widening any Breach, by whispering, exaggerating, or repeating what others have said. This, O God, I beg with all the Earnestness of my Soul, because I know my eternal Happiness very much depends upon it; for, since thou hast given such repeated Commands of keeping Peace, hast promised a Blessing to Peace-makers, and ensured to them the Title of being the Children of God; have not I Reason to apprehend not only thy Displeasure, but thy severest Judgements, even of being cast off from being thy Child, if I concur, through my Fault, to the breaking of Peace. Thou hast given me too much Ground to fear it, and therefore, I here Petition for thy Grace that I may amend whatever Evil I have done in this Kind; that I may keep Peace with all, as far as is possible, and, neither by Word or Deed, be the Occasion of breaking Peace between others.

In Time of any Quarrel, or of Passion-working.

RETIRE from the Occasion, as soon as may be, and, in private, fall down upon your Knees before God, imploring his Help. If the Disturbance be great, or continues, prostrate yourself to the Ground, like Christ in the Garden, and, with the utmost Humility, endeavour to move God to your Assistance.

Look down upon me, O God, and shew Mercy to thy Servant; for, behold my Soul is disturbed.

A Storm is risen within me, and it is thou alone who canst command a Calm.

My Soul is darkened, and there is nothing of Help or Life left within me.

My Thoughts are in Confusion, and restless Passion disturbs my Breast.

O God, have Compassion on me, and forsake me not in this Hour of Trouble.

Behold, now I am in Distress; but, I beseech thee, let not my Passion prevail.

Let not my Passion prevail within me; for I know it is sinful, and leads to Sin.

Give me Grace to stand against it as an Enemy; and suffer me not to hearken to its Suggestions, and be deluded by it.

§ II. Give Ear, my Soul, while Passion is working so strongly within thee, thy God calls upon thee.

He commands thee to be patient under thy Trouble. He commands thee to submit to his divine Will, even in this present Trial.

He commands thee to forgive Injuries and even to love thy Enemies.

Lift up thy Eyes to him, and see; is not He thy God? And, art not thou his Creature?

And wilt thou now stop thy Ears, and turn away thy Face from him?

Hast thou any Hopes of Salvation, or of any Good but what is to come from him?

What then is it thou dost? Wilt thou have more Regard to thy own Passion than to him?

Wilt thou be governed by thy Passion, and not by him?

§. III.

§. III. What can thy Passion do for thee? It puts thee at present into great Disorder, and fills thee with Confusion.

It corrupts thy Reason, and darkens thy Faith.

It hides God from thy Eyes, and persuades thee to rebel against him.

It persuades thee to Folly and Rashness; to such Things as are injurious both to thyself and Neighbour.

To such Things as thou wilt be ashamed of when Peace returns, and must be the Matter of thy Repentance.

And is this what thou settest up against thy God, and thinkest its Commands more reasonable than his?

Ah, wretched, unhappy Soul, if this be thy Choice!

Ah, miserable Sinner, if such be thy Blindness!

§. IV. But be now more wise: Turn to thy God, and amidst all thy Disorders bow down and adore him.

Bow down, and now force the stubborn and rebellious Will to yield to his Commands.

Renounce thy Passion as a Monster that would devour thee, or draw thee into the Snares of Hell.

Adore thy God, whose Mercy is solicitous for thy Good, and requires thy Obedience, that thou mayest not make thyself miserable.

Accept of his Commands; open thy Arms, open thy Breast and receive them.

For in them God speaks to thee, and not only shews thee, but commands thee to be wise and happy.

And what canst thou say of thyself, if thou wilt not hear when God calls upon thee?

If thou still givest Ear to thy Passion, and wilt have no Regard to what God pleads and commands, and all for thy Interest?

§. V. Ah, rebel Soul, turn towards thy God, and hear how he presses thee to Charity and Peace.

He commands thee to forgive, and be reconciled, and, till this be done, he declares thou shalt have no Part in him.

He declares he will not receive thy Gift at the Altar; He will not hear thy Prayers, and that whatever thou askest shall be in vain.

He declares that thy Sin's shall not be forgiven, until thou forgivest thy Neighbour; and that, till this be done, as often as thou askest Pardon for thy Sins, it shall be to ask Judgement against thyself.

He declares, that till thou hast from thy Heart endeavoured to make Peace, thou shalt not see his Face.

These are the Declarations God makes to thee; these are his Threats published to thee, in these very Circumstances in which thou now art.

Deceive not therefore thyself with vain Pretexts of having Reason on thy Side, or the Provocation being greater than can be borne.

For there is no Reason can be allowed against God's Commands: No Difficulty can be an Excuse for Disobedience to his Law.

§. VI. Thou must either do what he requires, or suffer what he means.

For as he is merciful to the repenting Sinner, so he manifests his Justice in punishing the Obstinate.

It is he commands thee, whom the Angels obey, in whose Presence the Pillars of Heaven tremble, and to whose Voice both Heaven and Earth are subject.

It is he commands thee, who has cast the rebellious Angels out of Heaven for their Sin; who banished our first Parents out of Paradise; who drowned the whole World; who consumed *Sodom* with Fire.

If Sin be thus punished by him, who art thou, that standest out against his Commands; who art thou that refusest to hear his Voice?

If thou hast Power above Men and Angels to defend thee against his Wrath; thou art then safe in following thy own Ways.

But if thou art like other Sinners, what canst thou expect? Either amend, or take Part in the Punishment of Sin.

For it is the same God speaks to thee, who spoke to them, and, being not heard, made them feel the Weight of his Justice.

§. VII. But it is not only his Justice, but his infinite Love to Man, calls upon thee to follow the Ways of Peace.

Lift up thy Eyes, and see thy Redeemer nailed to a disgraceful Cross, and dying under the Torments of it.
For whom does he shed his sacred Blood? Is it not for sinful Man?

For whom did he undertake that laborious Work of the Redemption? Was it not for his Enemies, for those who had infinite Ways offended him?

If then God does so much for his Enemies: If thou thyself art one of those Enemies; and for this let thy Sins speak.

If notwithstanding all thy Ingratitude, Wickedness, and repeated Crimes against him, he still offers thee Peace, seeks thee, while thou runnest from him, calls aloud after thee, whilst thou turnest thy Back upon him, and even gives his Life for the Pardon of thy Offences.

If God does thus for thee; what is there thou, poor sinful Worm, canst refuse to do? Is not this his Love enough to draw thee into the Ways of Charity?

Wilt thou do nothing for thy Neighbour, while thy God does so much for thee? Wilt thou neither imitate the Charity of thy God, nor obey his Cominands?

§. VIII. Unhappy Creature, if neither Justice, nor Love of thy God, can move thee!

Look upon thyself, and see (if thou art not quite blind) how desperate thy Case must be, and how contemptible.

Whilst there being nothing good, nothing holy, but God, thou standest out against all that is in him.

Whilst all the Good thou canst expect, and all the Interest thou hast, depending intirely upon him, thou renouncest all thy Dependance on him.

Put by the Blind of thy Passion a little, and see thou canst be thus deliberately mad.

What wilt thou, what canst thou do without thy God?

See but how poor a Thing thou art, whilst a little Breath of a Worm like thyself, a little Provocation, of Contempt or Affront, quite overthrows thee, and puts thee in Confusion.

And what then art thou, to set thyself up against thy God? What wilt thou do, when the Arm of the Almighty is stretched forth against thee?

§. IX.

§. IX. Ah, my God ! Far be this from me. I see my Weakness, and I confess it before thee.

I am nothing but Misery, I can do nothing without thee ; much less can I do any Thing against thee.

My whole Dependance is on thee : My Happiness is in thy Commands, and all the Good I can expect must be the Effect of thy Grace and Mercy. Behold then, I here acknowledge thy Law, I receive thy Commands, and I make a Surrender of myself to thee my God.

Nature, it is true, is unwilling to bend, and my stubborn Passion dreads a Submission.

But let all bow down and submit to thy Will, who art the sovereign Lord of all.

This is what I declare and approve, as most just : this what I desire as most holy.

For thou alone art good and holy, and I am corrupt and sinful ; and my only Good is in renouncing myself and following thee.

§. X. Help me in this O God, I beseech thee : The Sense of my own Misery and of thy Goodness, press me with Earnestness, to make this Petition to thee.

Thou seest what my Disturbance is, and how far it has cast me off from thee ; nay how near it has brought me to the State of an Unbeliever.

Thou seest how weak I am ; so that though my Desires through thy Grace, are good ; yet how little able am I to overcome it.

Stand by me therefore now, O God ; come in to my Assistance, and help me with thy most perfect Grace.

Have Compassion on me, and let thy Mercy, and not my Sin prevail against me.

Thou hast shewed thy Mercy to be infinite to repenting Sinners, and an equal Compassion to the Distressed.

This gives me Encouragement to ask, and even to hope for Help, while through my great Unworthiness I know I deserve nothing.

§. XI. All I can do is to declare an Abhorrence of my own Ways, and make a Protestation of following thine.

Behold then, with all Sincerity, I pronounce these sacred Words ; Lord not my Will, but thine be done.

M 2

Thou

Thou commandest me to forgive all Injuries, and even the present: Lord, I forgive it: Thy Will be done.

Thou commandest me to overcome Evil with Good: Lord, in Obedience to thee, I will do Good for Evil: Thy Will be done.

Thou commandest me to be patient, and to deny myself: Lord, I will now resist my own Inclination, and with Patience bear the present Evil: Thy Will be done.

Thou commandest me to suppress all Motions of Anger or Passion, and with Meekness to humble myself under thy Appointments: Lord, I will endeavour to do thus: Thy Will be done.

Thus, O Lord, do I propose no other Rule to myself but thy holy Will.

And whatever I find within myself contrary to thy Will, I resolvē to stand against it, and thus in all Things acknowledge thee to be my God.

§. XII. But then, O most gracious Lord, let thy Hand be with me to be my Help.

Let thy Grace giye me Strength to suppress all Motions of Anger, and stifle all Resentments.

As often as these shall arise, may I forthwith stand against them, and with Resolution dissipate all such Thoughts.

May I then remember the Engagement I have made with thee; and, having chosen thee to be my God, may I no more adhere to thy Enemy.

And if Nature will not easily yield, let me then be mindful that Heaven is to be gained by Violence, and even force it to comply.

But this must be thy Work, O God; and, having now mercifully begun it, I beseech thee, mercifully finish it.

Leave me no more to myself; suffer me no more to be carried away by Passion.

But now, from this Moment, let me put on our Lord Jesus Christ, and by his Charity and Meekness overcome all Evil. Come then, Lord Jesus, take Possession of my Soul.

Of forgiving Injuries.

O God, who hast given us no less a Form of Charity towards our Neighbour, than thy only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; grant, I beseech thee, O most heavenly Father, that I may endeavour with all my Power to follow this Pattern; so as not only to love my Friends, but likewise my Enenies, and to let no Sort of Injury streighten that Charity, which by Christ's Command and Example is due to all.

In doing thus, I must own a great Difficulty, because Nature, being provoked, is full of Resentment, exaggerates the Wrong it has received, strongly pleads the Justice of doing itself Right, and all its Inclination is to render Evil for Evil. These being Difficulties of my Nature, I here most humbly beg thy Grace, that Nature may not carry me against the Law; but that by thy heavenly Assistance, I may resolutely give a Check to all such Motions, and force this inward Corruption to yield to thy holy Will.

Thou, O God, who knowest my extreme Weakness, and the Violence of my Pride and Passion, must see my Case to be such as deserves Compassion, as far as Misery and Unhappiness are capable of moving it; for I have no Help in myself, whilst my Reason, being darkened, affords but little Light, and being corrupted by Passion, pleads much more for Revenge than Charity. What then can I do here, being deprived of all natural Help, if thou, my God, dost not shew Mercy to thy Servant, and supply all my Wants by thy Grace? Have Compassion therefore, I beseech thee, and, in these unhappy Circumstances, suffer me not to perish; shew thyself to be the God of Nature, in forcing Nature to be obedient to thy Commands, that I may live and not die.

I confess, thou hast given me great Help in this difficult Affair, by making it my Interest to forgive the Injuries that have been done me. For when I find thou hast both promised and threatened, that with the same Measure we give to others, it shall be measured to us again; this plainly assures me, that as I deal with

with my Neighbour, so I shall find thee, either merciful or severe in thy Judgements. O God, what greater Encouragement canst thou give me, than thus to put the Decision of my eternal Lot into my own Hands, and to engage me by the Love of myself, to be charitable towards my Neighbour, in forgiving whatever Wrong he has done me.

See then, my Soul, how this Affair stands. Thou hast committed many Offences against thy God: And thy Neighbour has offended thee. Thy Sins against God are such as expose thee to the severest of his Judgements, make Death terrible, and put thy Eternity to the Hazard of being miserable with Devils. The Injury done thee may be in a great Part the Effect of Mistake, Surprise, or Indiscretion; it may be no more than a sudden Passion, already repented of: And if caused by Malice, yet borne with Patience, will certainly do thee more Good than Harm; and, if forgiven from thy Heart, may cancel all the Debt of Sins which now stands against thee. Thus stands thy Case. And is it not a great Mercy, that, upon such easy Terms, thou mayest remove all the Weight of thy Sins, and, notwithstanding thy manifold Unworthiness, mayest hope to find God merciful to thee; it being God himself that has said it; *forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.*

O God, I here acknowledge thy Mercy; for what have I to fear but my Sins? If these be taken away, Death has no Sting, and Judgement will be without Terror: But, as long as I have Reason to apprehend the Guilt of these to stand against me, I cannot look before me towards Eternity, but the Prospect is attended with Dread and Confusion. How merciful then art thou, O God, to let all this depend upon such easy Conditions, and to leave it so in my Hands, that I may hope to find all my monstrous and numberless Sins forgiven, if I do but forgive the trifling Offences committed against me by my Neighbour, and, upon shewing this Mercy, have the Promise of finding Mercy!

I bless thee, O God, for this thy Goodness to Sinners, and I desire all Creatures, both in Heaven and Earth, may adore and magnify thy Name, for this thy infinite

infinite Mercy. But then, O most gracious Lord, I beg thy Grace to help me in the Acceptance of this thy Goodness, and to secure me against all Abuse of it. For, as I see great Mercy in the Offers thou makest; so I see great Judgements threatened against those who accept them not.

What greater Judgement can there be, than in the Declaration thou hast made; *if ye forgive not, neither will your Father, who is in Heaven, forgive your Trespasses*: And what more terrible, than the Sentence pronounced by the Apostle; *he shall have Judgement without Mercy, that has shewed no Mercy?* If then I embrace not the Offer of thy Goodness, and will not forgive my Neighbour, I fall under all that is here declared, and must expect no Mercy from thy Hand.

Dreadful State! To be in Want of infinite Mercy, and to be certainly excluded from all Mercy! O blessed God, suffer me not to be thus blind, as for a Humour, Passion, or Anger against my Neighbour, to shut Heaven against myself, and deprive my Soul of that Mercy, which infinite Goodness offers, and of all that has been purchased by the sacred Blood of my Redeemer. Suffer me not to be thus mad, as to pursue my Neighbour with Anger, and in this Anger to do myself ten thousand Times more Mischief than can possibly be ever in his Power to do me.

Far be this from me, O God. Behold therefore, I here make it my Choice to renounce all Humour and Passion, and Desire of Revenge; I willingly quit all other Motions of Anger, whatever they be, rather than forfeit the Title, which, by thy Grace, I have to thy Mercy. I am willing to deny my whole Self, and all the stubborn, perverse Humours, that are in me, rather than fall under this Sentence, of *having Judgement without Mercy*.

Preserve me, O God, I befeech thee, from this Unhappiness; and whatever the Struggles of Nature be against this Charity; yet still let thy Grace be victorious, and carry me through all the Opposition that is made against me. It is hard for Pride to be thus humbled, to be affronted, and yet to yield: It is hard for Passion to be thus provoked, and then tamely to sit down, without

making any Return. But, is it not still much harder to be judged without Mercy; to fall under the Wrath of God, and to be cut off from all Hopes of his Goodness appearing in my Behalf? O God, may my Nature be forced to embrace what it is most averse to, and submit to what it most abhors, rather than I be brought to this State of endless Despair, by favouring it in its unchristian Desires.

But, while I beg thy Grace for forgiving all Injuries, I ask for such Grace of true, solid Charity, as to forgive them from my Heart. Because such I confess to be my Weakness, O God, that sometimes I fear I do not forgive from my Heart, what I forgive with my Lips. This I have too great Reason to suspect, because there remains still some Disaffection or Dislike; because I seldom mention the Parties, but there is some Sting in what I say; because I willingly join with those who speak to their Disadvantage; because I feel a Satisfaction in any Thing that is let fall by others to their Discredit: Lastly, because I cannot so easily bear from them what I do from others, but every little Accident is enough to open the Breach again that has been between us,

Upon these Symptoms, I have too great Reason to be jealous, that, where I pretend to forgive Injuries, it is no more than a Pretext, but not done from the Heart. Wherefore, I beseech thee, O God, to hear ~~me in the~~ the Petition I now make; that in this great Point of Charity, on which all depends, I may be sincere, and not only in Words, but from my Heart forgive, so as to retain no Bitterness or Ill-will against the Parties with whom I pretend to be reconciled; but to be united to them in such true Charity, as to rejoice in all the Opportunities of doing them Good, to embrace them with Readiness, and to be troubled at any Evil that befalls them. These are the Effects of true Charity, and therefore I beg they may be found in me.

This Petition I offer to thee with all the Earnestness of my Soul, because I know how subject I am to deceive myself in this important Point: And because I likewise know how rigorous the Sentence is, which thou hast pronounced against those who forgive not their Brother from

from their Hearts: That all their Sins shall come to thy Remembrance, and the Punishment of them shall be as severely exacted, as if not one of them had ever been forgiven. This, O God, is a State to be dreaded, and therefore, I beseech thee, in thy infinite Mercy, to have Compassion on me, under all my Weaknesses, and deliver me from it. What greater Misfortune can I have than to have all my Sins revived, and the Debt of my whole Life to stand in Force against me? And yet this is the Misery I bring upon myself, if I do not from my Heart forgive my Neighbour in whatever he has trespassed against me.

If Thou art pleased to favour me in this Petition, grant likewise, I may do thus in forgiving my Brother from my Heart, not only once or twice, or seven Times, but seventy Times seven, as thou hast commanded; that so my Charity to my Neighbour may have some Resemblance with that, which my daily Sins stand in need of from thee; and what is this, but to be forgiven to the End of my Life? May I then forgive, O Lord, as long as I desire and hope to be forgiven.

Neither let the Fear of encouraging my Neighbour in Evil, be a Motive to me against the Practice of this Charity. It is enough that thou hast commanded it, O God; and therefore it must be Impertinence in me to be concerned in the Consequences of thy Precepts. I am to do my Duty, and leave the rest to thy infinite Wisdom and Providence, which stand in no Need of my Cautions; which, when weighed in thy Balance, I wish they be not found without Weight, and no better than plausible Disguises, and Pretexts of Charity, for the Cover of Uncharitableness.

Give Ear to me, O God, and grant, I beseech thee, my Petitions in this weighty Concern of Charity. Thou hast sufficiently informed me, how indispensable it is, and that neither Faith nor Alms, nor shedding of my Blood for the Name of Christ, can be available without it. Thou hast taught me, that, if I forgive not the Injuries done against me, all my Prayers will be to ask for Judgements against myself. How miserable then must I be, if, in this Point, I deceive myself, and find Reasons

for dispensing with thy Precept, which as thou hast declared, will admit of no Dispensation.

Hear me then, O God of Charity, and mercifully help me; help me to overcome all the Difficulties of Nature, and let not Pride, Stubborness or Passion, carry me against thy Commandment. Unhappy I, if these still prevail in me; If I take these for my Council and Directors, when thou thyself hast taught me what I am to do. Give me thy Grace therefore, I beseech thee, to stand with Resolution against these Evils, and though Nature be unwilling to bend, let thy Grace be a force upon it: For why should Sin be heard to my Ruin, where God speaks to my Salvation?

O Jesus be thou my Advocate here, and let the Merits of thy sacred Passion plead for my obtaining what I ask. Thou hast made thyself my Rule, and no more is required of me, than what thou hast done thyself for my Encouragement. In this thou hast left me without Excuse, if I fail in this Duty. For how can a Sinner make any Exceptions against that which his Redeemer has done for his Example? Or how can I think that Humiliation hard, I a poor sinful Worm, when I see thee, the Son of God, stoop to it? It is thou hast taught me, not only to forgive Injuries, but even to seek my Enemies, to invite them by Favours, and to purchase their Reconciliation, though upon the hardest Terms. Grant therefore, O blessed Redeemer, that, by thy Help, I may now learn this Lesson; Grant that in this I may be thy Disciple, I am weak, and the Contradiction of my Nature is great; but thy Goodness and Power are infinite, and there can be no Difficulties, where these command. Behold then, I beseech thee, a poor Sinner complaining of his unhappy Infirmities, and with all Sincerity desiring thy Help; despise not my Cries: but now, according to the multitude of thy Mercies towards Sinners, have Compassion on a Sinner and grant this Petition, of forgiving all from my Heart, without which it will be in vain, that I have believed in Thee.

Mildness, Anger.

ICome now before thee, O God, to make a Complaint against myself, and to desire thy Grace for my Relief. I profess myself a Disciple of my Lord Jesus, and a Follower of his Gospel, upon the Observation of which, I believe my Salvation depends. But see my Weakness, O God; while I believe thus, yet I follow it not; Temper, Inclination, and Nature, lead me on; the old Man prevails in me, even while I pretend to have put it off and to follow the new.

This is too remarkable, so that I cannot disguise it even to myself, in being easily moved to Anger, and Passion, it being too imperious, too harsh and rough, too forward in admitting Resentments, in taking Exceptions, and too far, O God, too far from that Spirit of Mildness, Patience, Long-suffering, Moderation and Meekness, which my blessed Redeemer has so much recommended to me in his holy Gospel, and taught me by his Example.

Now these ill Qualities, though in Practice I often justify them as reasonable, and often find Reasons to excuse them within myself; yet being now in thy Presence, O God, I speak my Conscience, I confess them to be great Weaknesses, such as create to myself and others many unnecessary Troubles, and give Occasion to many Sins.

For must not that be of a very weak and unfixed Nature, which is easily moved; which with every light Breath or Touch begins to toss, and is put into Disorder.

Are they not generally the most contemptible Creatures, which are most easily provoked and alarmed with that which is not worth their Concern.

Are not the Infirm and Sick most easily put upon the Fret?

Is there not a Want of Generosity and Greatness in those, who take Notice of small Provocations, and know not, how to pass them by, or despise them.

Thus it is certainly, if Nature only be considered; but, if Regard be had to Faith and to the Christian, do there not, upon this, appear Arguments of a much more considerable Weakness?

For

For is it not a considerable Weakness in a Christian, who has the Work of Eternity upon his Hands, to be diverted, taken up, and hindered by very inconsiderable and common Trifles?

Is it not a Weakness to let the Peace of the inward Man so easily be disturbed, when he can do nothing well for Eternity, under such Disturbance?

Is it not a Weakness, to become impatient upon every light Provocation, when Patience is so much commanded; and in the Loss of which a Christian loses the Command of his Soul? In Patience thou shalt possess thy Soul.

Is it not a Weakness for a Christian so easily and frequently to lay aside that Humility and Meekness which Christ so expressly commands all his Followers to learn of him.

And how many Sins do the Want of Patience and Meekness cause in me, whilst I no sooner become impatient, but I speak and do such Things as are not only disedifying and of ill Example, but likewise contrary to Reason and Justice, and to all those Rules which my Redeemer has given me?

Wherefore I now beseech thee, O God, to change this my unhappy temper, and to grant me more Moderation and Patience; as likewise such true Firmness of Mind as to be able to bear, unmoved, the common Difficulties and Trials of human Life. This must be the Effect of thy holy Grace, to work this great Change in me; and therefore I now address myself to the Throne of thy infinite Goodness, O God, beseeching thee to have Compassion on a poor unhappy Sinner, who confessing his (or her) many Weaknesses before thee, seeks to thee for Relief.

Thou hast promised to hear and help those who put their Trust in thee; those who having no Confidence in themselves, in their own Endeavours or Strength, fly with Hope to thy infinite Goodness, for the Remedy of their Infirmities. Behold, O God, such a Petitioner before thee; one who is truly grieved, to see in himself so much Weakness, and by the frequent Experience of his fruitless Resolutions is fully convinced, that all he can do is to no Purpose, except thou, O Lord, art pleased to assist

assist him with thy heavenly Grace, and to give a Blessing to his Endeavours.

Distrusting therefore in myself, and with my Hopes in the infinite Treasure of thy Goodness, I beg the Grant of this my Petition; that thou wouldst mercifully vouchsafe to give me such a Spirit, as is prescribed in the Gospel, to the Followers of my Redeemer Jesus Christ.

Vouchsafe to give me the Spirit of Patience, that I may not so easily fall into Passion, or be so much disturbed within myself, upon ordinary Provocations, Disappointments, or Trials. I find very ill Effects of Anger, in being pushed on by it to speak not only what is indiscreet, but likewise rash and uncharitable; so that, instead of loving my Neighbour and sparing him, as Charity obliges me, I then whet my Teeth against him, and not only bite him, but even endeavour to do it in the most tender Part, so to wound him more certainly and give him the greater Provocation. Thus this one Sin of mine opens the Way to many, and sometimes makes such Differences, as are never more to be healed; especially in destroying the Peace of Families; and keeping up such an evil Spirit, that nothing can be said or done, but some Advantage is made of it, and it furnishes Matter for continual Clamour and Dissention.

Thus true it is, that the *Anger of Man works not the Righteousness of God*; but carries him generally against all that is just and righteous; so that in *Saul* I see the Figure of all Persons under this Passion: For as he, being exasperated against *David*, was seized with an evil Spirit, by which he was pushed on to lift up his Hand against *David*, and with his Javelin to fasten Innocence, like a Criminal, to the Wall: So all that are in Passion, seem to be seized with an evil Spirit; this moves their Tongue, their Hands and their Eyes; and, under this Influence, Innocence and Justice are not spared; they are laid under Scandals, and are struck at with so much Eagerness, as discovers plainly, that an evil Spirit directs the Blow.

Many other ill Effects I find of Impatience and Passion; in causing great Variety of Uneasiness, in destroying the Comfort of all Blessings, and disturbing my own and my Neighbours' Peace, to the great Prejudice

of

of all Duties that belong to Salvation. Wherefore I now beseech thee to give me a greater Steadiness of Mind, so as not to be moved at common Accidents, nor to be put into Disorder, upon ordinary Provocations. Give me Patience, in this mortal Life, to bear that Part of the Burthen which comes to my Share, with Patience, Humility, and due Composure of a Christian.

If I consider the Multitude of my Sins, these tell me, I cannot suffer too much; but that all that happens is not a Penance proportioned to my Unworthiness. If I consider the Example and Commands of Christ, I find the Life of a Christian is to be a Life of Suffering; that he is to bear even the severest Trials with a peaceable Submission to the Will of God, and even to rejoice in the Hope of those Promises, God has made to such as suffer with Patience. If I consider the Gospel, I find Patience and humble Suffering recommended above all Things.

And what a Christian then am I, who, being obliged to Patience upon so many Titles, have so very little; that whereas I ought to bear all Things, I bear Nothing as I ought, and every trifling Occasion is enough, and too much for all the Patience I have? O God, this shews my Weakness too evidently against myself, and how unlike am I to what I profess. And does it not evidently shew too, the little Pains I take in overcoming myself? For, if I were more in earnest, is there not Grounds enough to hope I might have a greater Command of my Passions? Might I not bear many Things with Patience, which now put me into a Flame?

My own Conscience comes in here Evidence against me. For this deposes, that when Pride or Interest require me to conceal my Resentments and suppress my Passion, I know how to do it, and bear great Self-denials with such a remarkable Composure of Mind, as to let no Sign of Disturbance appear. And does not this discover how much it is my Fault, as often as I am passionate or impatient; since were I as much in earnest in my eternal as temporal Concerns, I should, with the same Resolution, command my Passion, for thy Sake, O God, as upon any other Motive of Self-love or the World?

I confess

I confess, O God, the Evidence is too clear against me ; and I must acknowledge it is my Fault, that I so easily and often fall into Impatience. But still, O most gracious Lord, I here implore thy Assistance for the Amendment of this great Failing. Grant therefore, that a lively Faith may at all Times keep my Soul awake ; and that by the Help of this I may be watchful against whatever can be displeasing to thee ; and by a Diligence suitable to an Affair of Eternity, labour to stand against all those Inclinations, which are either sinful or lead to Sin. And in particular, that I may resist all Motions to Impatience, govern my Passion, give a Check to Anger, and be afraid of departing from the humble Patience, which is given in Charge to the Followers of thy only Son, our Redeemer Jesus Christ.

But besides Patience, I here, with all the Earnestness of my Soul, beseech thee to give me the Spirit of Meekness, that, as thy Apostle often advises, I may be mild and tender-hearted and gentle unto all ; that, for this End, I may lay aside all Fierceness, Harshness, and whatever other Attendants there are of a proud and imperious Heart. This I ask of thee because I see Fierceness and all the Effects of Pride condemned by thy Apostle, and all that belongs to Moderation and Mildness very much recommended by him ; I see the same approved by the Example of my Redeemer, and by his Voice I am called to learn it. Grant therefore, O God, that having so great Motives for making this Petition, I may find thy Favour, and now obtain what I ask.

This Petition I press again, because I find all Imperiousness, Fierceness, and Harshness towards others, very disagreeable to my Circumstances. For what if I have others under me, subject to my Beck, and such who dare not controul me ? Am not I a poor Sinner, much worse, it may be, in the Sight of God than they ? Am not I a Criminal, ungrateful and disobedient to my God ? Am not I to die like them, be laid in the Earth, and to become the Food of Worms ? Am not I to be called to an Account, as much as they, and to be judged ; and have not I reason to fear what my eternal Doom may be ? May not I for my Iniquities be

be condemned to Hell: While they, for their Patience in the Trials which I give them, may be for ever blessed with God?

O God, if these my unhappy Circumstances were duly before my Eyes, how far should I be from all the Ways of an imperious and impatient Pride: How solicitous should I be to temper all my Words and Actions, with Meekness, Humility, and Gentleness, and let it always appear, that, while I command others, I am always mindful of myself being a Servant, and many Ways unhappy? Now since thus I ought to be, grant, O most merciful Lord, that thus it may ever be with me: Grant I may always have a Moderation becoming my Circumstances, that I may never make others unhappy, who love so little to be so myself; that I may never unnecessarily provoke others to Impatience, who am myself so impatient; that I may never be cruel to others, who stand so much in Need of Mercy myself. O God, since I am daily so very much in Want of thy Compassion, upon Account of the many Provocations I give thee, grant I may always shew Compassion to others, that so I may hope to find it with thee.

And here, O God, I beseech thee that I may no more be prevailed on by the usual Arguments, which plead against the gentler Methods, and plead a Necessity for being severe. For though some perverse Tempers may seem to require it; yet this cannot be, so often as I fall into Passion, and take hold of this Necessity for justifying my own Impatience. For thou, O Jesus, hast taught me another Lesson, whilst sending thy Apostles into a perverse and wicked World, thou didst command them to go like Sheep into the midst of Wolves. Now if the Mildness of Sheep was what thou didst prescribe for overcoming the Fierceness of Wolves; is it not plain, by the Determination of God himself, that there is no Necessity of putting on the Wolf for overcoming the Wolf, but that it is much better done by the Meekness of the Sheep? So Heaven has decided this Case.

Grant therefore, O blessed Jesus, that I may ever follow this Method, I know how powerful of itself it is

is in moderating the worst of Natures, and breaking the Violence of Passion ? and while we see how very effectual it is, we discover the Greatness of our Corruption, and likewise of our Indiscretion, in knowing its Virtue, and making so little Use of it ; in meeting Passion with Passion, and thus enflaming our Adversary, when a little Mildness would be much more to our Purpose, in quite disarming him, and without any Contest gaining the Victory.

Now Mildness being thus powerful, how much more must it be so under thy Blessing, O God ? And where then can be the Necessity of departing from it ? A Necessity may be pretended for giving Liberty to Passion, and making it warrantable. But this must be by such as have a better Opinion of what Nature inclines to, than what God prescribes. Grant therefore, O merciful Redeemer, that I may both approve and follow what thou hast taught me.

I own there is a Charm in Meekness, and a greater Attractive than all Beauty ; it is the most becoming Ornament of a Christian, and is more prevailing than Ill-humour, Passion, Imperiousness or Force ; for all these have a certain Deformity in them, which raises an Aversion or Dislike, even when the Commands happen to be reasonable ; and they only serve to disturb the Peace of Families, to make Persons unfit for all Duties, and to cause Disorders, where the Pre-text is to reform it ; and therefore cannot be a general Practice, where either Christianity or Discretion governs.

Let therefore thy Grace, O God, work this good Effect in me, that I may not only disapprove what is thus unreasonable, but likewise, with a Resolution, stand against whatever Inclinations I find in myself at any Time to it. Assist me, I beseech thee, in this, and let thy Grace prevail in me above Nature, and may I never more be wanting in any Endeavours necessary on my Part, for overcoming myself. By these Means may I come to that Steadiness, as to be above Provocations, and to let no Accident destroy that inward Peace, which is the Comfort and general Help to a Christian Life. May I study to be gentle and meek towards all, confide in this Method for effecting what-

ever

ever I have to do. I have sufficient Encouragement for this from thy Example, O Jesus, from thy Orders, from thy Commands; and having besides these the Promise of a Blessing (*Blessed are the Meek*) grant, that I may ever depend on this, and may never pretend or desire to go farther than this will carry me.

S O L I C I T U D E .

I Know thee, O God, to be a God of Mercy, that thou hearest the Cries of the Miserable, and takest Delight in helping the Afflicted. The Knowledge of this thy Goodness brings me into thy Presence this Day, to lay before thee my Unhappiness, and implore thy Mercy for my Relief. See then the Case of a poor Sinner.

Through thy Grace, I have Faith in thee, and in thy all-governing Providence; that thy Wisdom overlooks the whole Creation; that nothing happens but by thy Orders; that thy Goodness is engaged for all that trust in thee; and therefore, that, as it is my Duty so I may with Comfort and Security cast my whole Care upon thee. Thus, through thy Mercy I believe.

And yet, O Lord, see my Unhappiness, see how very great my Weakness is: For notwithstanding this my Faith, I am still subject to infinite Fears, strange Apprehensions disturb my Breast, and a restless Concern is my daily Rack; So that though I enjoy many considerable Blessings, of the least of which, O God, I am unworthy, and such as would make others happy, and thankful to thee; yet I, ungrateful and blind, lose all the Sense of them, and have little Comfort in what is present, through the Disturbance of those Imaginations, which regard not what is, through excessive Concern for what is not, and may never be.

And, O God, how many ill Effects has this on me, whilst it not only makes me ungrateful (Crime enough against so merciful a Benefactor) but likewise so streightens my Soul, that I can seldom, with true Liberty of Spirit, look towards thee? Worldly Concerns choke up my Spirit, and strange Oppressions deprive me of the much better Part of Life; so that, as often as I

turn

turn to Prayer, or other spiritual Duties, for my eternal Good, my busy Fears presently sink me below all that Concern, and I am surprised to find myself in the Midst of the World, when my Design was to discourse with thee.

By this Weakness I am in a Manner disabled, as to the Performance of whatever belongs to thy Worship, and the Relief of my Soul; so that while I see my great Distress, and how much I stand in need of thy Help, I see too, I am not able to seek or ask for what I want, having the World still stepping in, and my Fears always turning my Heart from Thee. Now being in these unhappy Circumstances, more concerned for Earth than Heaven, more solicitous for this present Life, than for Eternity, my Heart worldly, my Mind restless, my Fears ungovernable, my Imaginations strong, my Judgement weakened, my Memory impaired, my Faith and Hope without Life, and, through this Complication of Evils, being wholly a Stranger to Discretion; what can I do, thus miserable, O God, but lift my Eyes towards Thee, and beseech thee to have Compassion on me, and at this Time mercifully to assist me, in asking for the Help I want?

Wherefore now, O God, sensible of the great Indisposition of my Soul, though I cannot ask as I ought, yet with all the Sincerity and Earnestness I am able I most humbly beseech Thee to abate in me this excessive Solicitude, to which I am unhappily subject. Thou seest the many and considerable Mischiefs it causes in me, to the great Prejudice of my Soul; and whether it may not be, if not remedied, the Occasion of my eternal Ruin, is known only to Thee. Wherefore, O God, as thou hast been, at all Times, a God of Mercy and shewed the Wonders of thy Goodness, in the Relief of the Distressed; so now have Compassion on me a distressed Sinner, who cannot tell how to help myself.

If it were in my Power to take off this great Anxiety, and bring myself to a more moderate Spirit, I here lay before Thee the Sincerity of my Heart, and declare I would do it. But, O God, to whom all my Weakness is known, Thou seest, while my Desires are good, how incapable I am of performing it, and that if Thou dost

not

not both direct and help, and by thy Grace change the whole Temper of my Mind, I may complain of my Misfortune, but must live on in Despair of seeing it remedied.

Help me, therefore, O God of Mercy, and leave not me thy Servant, to struggle in vain with my Infirmitiy. . Have Pity on me, for all Things are in thy Power, and if thou wilt, thou canst change this perpetual Storm into a Calm.

And for this End, I make it my Petition to thee, to strengthen and perfect my Faith of the Life to come, that I may have a just Apprehension of all that belongs to Eternity, and learn to set no greater Value on the Things of this World than they deserve. Be favourable to me, O God, in this Petition, that I may practically understand and condemn the Folly of believing an Eternity to come, and yet of being so solicitous for the Things of this Life, as if there were no other to follow after it.

Let my Conscience, O God, lie under this Conviction, and my whole Life be governed by it: That, the Time of my Pilgrimage here being uncertain and short, the Concerns of it are inconsiderable or nothing, in Comparison of Eternity; and that if this goes on well and be duly taken Care of, the Concern of this momentary State ought not to be very great; because however Things go, whether well or ill, it will soon be at an End.

From hence, O God, may I ever see the Unreasonableness of being very solicitous for the Things of this Life, and of letting these so devour all my Thoughts as to have but very little to spare for the Business of my Salvation. Let me ever remember that I came not into this World, to provide for this World, but for Eternity; that, if I let this World steal away my Thoughts and my Care from the other, I commit a great Injustice against God and my own Soul: That, however busy I am at present, all such Thoughts and Care will perish, with whatever belongs to them; all will pass like a Shadow or a Dream, and I shall have nothing left at the End, but the Confusion of having neglected Eternity for such perishing Trifles.

O God,

O God, I must here own, with Thanks to thy Goodness, that I have some Sense of this now, and I most earnestly beg, that I may ever have. But remember, my Soul, the great Concern is thine. Take Pains therefore and Time, to imprint it well in thy Mind, consider it frequently, and since thou knowest thy own Infirmity, at every leisure Hour, reflect, meditate, and labour to revive such Truths, as may help to moderate at least, if not take off thy immoderate Solicitude for worldly Things.

For what will all this Excess of Concern profit thee?

Thou art under daily Disquiets; Fears and Uneasiness perplex thy Mind.

And for what? It is all for a perishable Life which cannot last; Every Hour and Moment carry away a Part of it; the End of it is approaching, and will soon surprize thee..

Nay, thy own Solicitude helps to bring it on, while thou daily wastest thyself with thy own Thoughts, and consumest thy Life by too eagerly thinking how to live.

And to how little Purpose is all this? For what one Thing canst thou do with all thy Solicitude?

Can thy disquieting Fears prevent or lessen the least Part of whatsoever thou dreadest?

Canst thou, by thy restless Apprehensions, gain any Thing of what is wanting to thee?

Can thy working Imaginations put Things into a better State?

Thou mayest disable thyself, and prejudice all thy rational Faculties.

Thou offendest God, and discovering both a Want of Faith and Confidence in him, puttest thyself in Danger of being deprived of his Protection and Providence.

This Mischief thou certainly dost thyself by thy Solicitude; but thou canst not do the least Good.

And why then dost thou open thy Breast to it? To a Thing which gives thee so much Uneasiness, and does thee so much Injury, but cannot help thee?

Dost not thou see then, that Solicitude is a very unreasonable and treacherous Passion, which, under Pretext of forwarding, most evidentlyinders whatever thou proposest or desirest?

And

And is there not too much Ground likewise to think it very sinful?

For, does it not shew thou hast not a due Confidence in God, nor a Faith of his Providence;

He commands all to call upon him in Time of Distress; to wait on him in Difficulties, with Comfort and Hope in his Promises, and to cast their whole Care upon him.

And what dost thou? Thou perplexest thyself with all that the Vanity of Fear can suggest to thee. Thou hast thy Eye always upon human Means; to these thy Hopes and Fears are ever proportioned; as far as these give Encouragement, so far thou hast both Hope and Comfort; and, where these fail, there thou art in Despair.

And dost not thou see, that in this there is nothing of Christian Hope; all thy Motions are according to the natural Man; thy Confidence and Comfort are the same, as in a Heathen's depending on Earth, and not on Heaven. And canst thou think this innocent, in one that believes in God.

And what dost thou think of the unequal Distribution of thy Concern and Care? Eternity to be infinitely more considerable, than this Moment of Life; and yet thou to give some general Glances only at the former, and to spend thyself wholly upon the latter! To send some imperfect Wishes only towards Heaven; and to employ all thy Study, thy Care, Interest, and Contrivance upon Earth?

Is this Justice? Is this according to thy Faith? How will this appear, when, at thy last Hour, thou wilt have a Prospect of Eternity before thee; when Eternity will shew thee what a contemptible Moment thy Life has been?

And will not then thy great Injustice be a Confusion to thee, in having had so very little Concern for Eternity, and so very much for Time.

Ah, my Soul! endeavour to comprehend this now; make use of thy Reason, and act according to it; make use of thy Faith, and let this have its due Influence upon all thy inward Motions; let all thy Excesses and Passions be regulated by it; and let thy Solitude be

be moderated, as this shall prescribe. Correct all thy Disorders by the Help of these Lights, and leave it not to the Justice of God to convince thee of thy Follies, by the Punishment of them.

Thus, O God, I ought to do, and thus I now propose with myself, wishing with all my Soul, that by the Help of thy Grace I might be enabled for the effectual accomplishing my Desires. Help me then, O God of Mercy, and now at this Time powerfully work this good Effect in my Soul. Grant I may be faithful in the Discharge of all my temporal Affairs, and perform them with that Diligence, as Justice demands of me, so that nothing entrusted with me, suffer through my ill Management or Neglect.

But then, O gracious Lord, take from me all that Excess of Care, which is my great Disquiet, and very displeasing to thee. Give me, I beseech thee, that true Moderation of Spirit, by which, while I propose and contrive what I think best, I may be still waiting for the Orders of thy Providence, and peaceably receive whatever I shall find to be thy Appointment. For this End I most earnestly beg of thee, to quiet all my vain and immoderate Fears, and to suppress all those wild Imaginations which discompose my Mind. Give me Grace and Discretion, to be watchful at all Times against these, to be always fearful of them, even when they seem to be innocent, and not to trust them, when they have even Piety to plead for them; because it is under these Colours they become Snares to me, and often make me unfit for all that is good.

Rather, O God, strengthen my Faith, and my Dependance on thee; for I know thee to be infinite in Wisdom, in Power, and in Goodness; that nothing can happen to me without thy Knowledge and Order; that what thou ordereft, however it may seem to me, is certainly for the best; that if I trust in thee, I shall not fail of thy particular Protection. And hence, O Lord, whatever my Desires or Proposals be, I beseech thee it may be my only Care to do, with Diligence, what belongs to me; and then to leave it with an entire Confidence, in thy Hands, to give a Blessing, if it shall

shall so seem good in thy Eyes, or to order it otherwise, as thy infinite Wisdom shall determine.

And, this, O God, may I in all Things and at all Times do, with peaceable and satisfactory Submission, such as is always due from a Creature to its God; most firmly believing, even in the midst of Disappointments or Distress, that it is best it should be so; that it is so judged by thy incomprehensible Wisdom; and therefore that I ought to judge so. For, who am I, that I should pretend to judge contrary to thee, or disapprove what thou dost?

This Petition therefore I repeat to thee again, O God, that in all Things I may consider what is my Duty, what the Glory of thy Name, or the Good of my Neighbour may demand of me; and having through the Direction of thy Grace, determined this Point, that I may undertake it under thy Protection, go on with it with Courage and Confidence in thy Blessing; not be dejected at Difficulties, Opposition, or Disappointments; but with Peace leave it in thy Hands, to give it the Issue which in thy Wisdom shall seem best to thee.

For this End I beseech thee again to give me a composed and steady Mind, free from all Excess of Apprehension and Fears; desirous to do well, and industrious in so doing; but without all immoderate Solicitude as to the Effect. For, as to the Success of all Things, this, I know, depends entirely upon thee; and therefore, as it belongs to thee, so I beg that I may ever leave it to thee, without making any Exceptions against it, whatever it be.

Thus, O God, may I ever go on, diligent and zealous, but not solicitous; with a great Confidence, not in my Industry or Management, but in thy Blessing; and with an entire Hope in thy Goodness; that, whatever my Disappointments or Distress may be, it may still be my Comfort, that thou art concerned in my Undertakings, and that, if they succeed not, as I propose, it is because thou, O God, hast ordained it some other Way. And in this may I ever rest, casting off all Solicitude as a great Temptation, as a dangerous Infirmity, as a Weakness unbecoming the Faith and Hope of a Christian, as a violent Passion which disables the

the Soul, and lays it open to many Snares of the Enemy; and therefore grant, I beseech thee, that by the Help of thy Grace, I may be ever watchful against it.

R E S I G N A T I O N .

TH E Sense of my present Wants brings me now a Petitioner to thee, O God, to beg thy Assistance in Behalf of a poor Sinner, who must perish under my Weakness, if thy Grace does not prevent it.

My great Complaint is against myself, that I feel an inward Rebellion against thy Appointments, and am subject to great Disquiets, because thy Will is done, and not mine. Now in this I see a very sinful Deformity, because I know it is the Duty of all Creatures to acknowledge thee their sovereign Lord ; and this not only in a formal Profession of Words, but in a practical and ready Submission to thy Orders; so as to approve thy holy Will as just ; to rest in it as that which ought to be ; to have Comfort and Joy in it, as being that which is the best.

This I know ought to be; and, therefore, as no Creature ought to rebel against thee, so none ought to dispute the Reasonableness of thy Will, or say to thee, why hast thou done thus? This is not the Part of a Creature to his God, but rather to wait thy Pleasure, and ever to embrace thy Will as most adorable.

This being my Duty, have not I great Reason to approach to thee, at present, who find so much Uneasiness within myself ; who presently become fretful, or dejected, as often as any Troubles arise, or Difficulties occur, which, in the Order of thy Providence, may be designed for my Good? This, I am certain, is not what thou hast taught?

Wherefore, I beseech thee, O God, to grant me a more christian Temper; such a Tempt as may be conformable to the Commands and Example of my Lord Jesus Christ; that I may not regard my own Inclination, or worldly Conveniences, but above all Things thy holy Will, and learn to rejoice in that as my only Good.

For this End I make my most earnest Address to thee, that thou wouldest please to take from me all Violence of Inclination, of Humour or Passion, and so to moderate all my Proposals and Desires of worldly Things, that, whatever it be I propose, I may be still prepared to receive all the Discouragements or Disappointments which thou shalt please to permit. It hence arises my present Unhappiness, that I am carried on with too much Eagerness, and depend too much upon what I propose; and therefore I beseech thee to give me more Moderation, and to abate in me whatever is too violent; for thus I hope to be more easy whenever I find my Expectation defeated.

Grant likewise, that I may set no more Value upon worldly Things than they deserve; that knowing them to be uncertain, and perishable, I may neither seek them with too much Earnestness, nor possess them with too great a Dependance, nor afflict myself upon their being changed, lost, or taken from me.

I ask again of thee, O God, that whether in public or private Concerns, I may not be too positive in my own Desires, or in laying out the Course and Issue of Things, as if I certainly knew what was for the best: Rather, O God, I beseech thee, let it be my constant Practice to suspect all my own Desires, and, even then, to give a Check to them, when I find them too much determined.

I confess, O God, I am very short-sighted, and that all the Consequences of my Desires are under so great a Darkness, that I have Reason to fear whatever I propose. I confess again, that I am subject to great Mistakes in the Choice of Means for the accomplishing what I propose as good; so that I am often surprised with Effects quite contrary to what I had designed.

Thus I frequently experience; and thus, I do not question, thou art pleased to order it, that I may not have a Confidence in myself; and may be convinced that all the Projects, and Prudence, and Counsels of Men are not to be depended on.

If there be sufficient Grounds for this distrusting of myself, then turn, O God, I beseech thee, all my Expectation and Confidence on thee, that there I may entirely

entirely rest, where there can be wanting neither Wisdom to foresee, nor Power to effect whatever thou proposest either for public or private Good.

Let my Soul, I most earnestly beseech thee, be ever possessed with this Truth, that thou alone knowest what is best, and that in thy holy Will is the Accomplishment of all that is good. And may the Evidence of this Truth so prevail with me, that I may at all Times be ready to yield up all my own Thoughts and Desires, and to embrace the Appointments of thy Will.

For since I am nothing but a Mixtute of Weakness and Darknes, and in thy Will alone is all Wisdom, Holiness and Justice, where can I expect to find what is good but in thee? In this then, O God, may I always be satisfied, that nothing can happen to me, but according to thy Will; and may this Principle have so much the Conduct of my Life, that it may silence all Complaints, and quiet all Uneasiness into a patient Submission.

Oh, that all my Passions were under this Government; that, whatever their Violence or Disturbance may be, upon discerning thy Will, they may ever submit; that I may make this my constant Rule, to complain, or say no more, when I reflect, than, that it is thou, O Lord, hast done it.

How many grateful Sacrifices might I offer every Day to thee, my Lord, were my Soul under this good Discipline! What an Advantage might I make, could I thus, upon every Contradiction, Trouble, or Disappointment, bow down, and say from my Heart; *be silent all you troublesome Passions, let the Will of my Lord be done.*

O God, I plainly apprehend, what a christian Peace here might be, amidst the greatest Disturbance, could I gain this Point. And observe, my Soul, what it is. It is only this; that thou approve, and be pleased with the Will of God being done in thee. And canst thou not do this?

O God, who am I, that I should not approve thy Will?

Thou art infinite in Wisdom, and in Power, and Glory; I am a poor sinful Worm; and who am I, that I should dispute thy Will?

Thou art the sovereign Lord of the World; I am the most unworthy of thy Creatures, who, by my frequent Sins, have made myself contemptible in thy Sight: And, who am I, that I should make Exceptions against thy Will?

Thou art supreme Judge of the Universe, and all thy Judgements are just: I am a Criminal, and by my Offences, am become unworthy of all thy Mercies: Who am I then, that I should be uneasy under thy Appointments?

I make it my Profession to follow thee, and pray every Day that thy Will may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven: And who am I now, that I should murmur at thy Will?

I see the Sun, Moon and Stars, obedient to thy Beck; the Sea and Earth, with all Creatures in them; the Heaven, with the blessed Spirits, all yielding a ready Submission to thy Will: And, who am I, that I should stand out against it?

O God, far be this from me; far be it from me to be guilty of this Contempt against infinite Majesty and Goodness.

I see the Folly and Madness of this Rebellion, and therefore here declare my Abhorrence of it.

And most humbly beg of thee to confirm me against the Guilt of what I see to be so unreasonable.

For behold I here acknowledge before thee, that I am a poor, helpless Creature, and know not the Things that are for my Good.

I am in the Dark; and though I have many Wishes, yet cannot tell whether the obtaining my Desires may not be my greatest Misfortune.

I have Variety of Uneasiness, but know not whether the Subject of my Complaints may not be the best for me, and even the Effects of thy Mercy.

I have many Proposals and Contrivances, and am eager in them; and yet cannot tell whether that which I pursue with Earnestness, may not prove my Ruin.

I have many Disappointments, and think myself unhappy under them; and yet do not know but they may be necessary for my eternal Good.

Being thus blind, and having Ignorance and Uncertainty attending all whatever I propose, there can be nothing better for me than to depend entirely upon thy Will.

For nothing is hid from thee; thy Goodness proposes what is best: And thy Wisdom and Power are such that thou canst not be subject to Disappointments.

Behold then, O God, I surrender myself from this Moment into thy Hands, with all that belongs to me; and likewise whatever I shall undertake through the whole Course of my Life.

I will only do, on my Part, what thy holy Will and my Duty, according to the best of my Apprehension, seem to demand of me.

But then I leave it to thee, my God, to order and dispose all Things, without any Reserve, and as entirely as if I had proposed nothing to myself.

Do with me then, O Lord, as thou pleaseſt, and, without any Regard to my own Inclination, may thy holy Will be always done in me.

I ask nothing but this, Lord, thy Will be done; give me Grace to be always easy under the Effects of thy Will.

Grant I may ſeek or desire nothing out of thee; for, if I reſt not in thy Will, it is plain I ſeek not my Reſt in thee.

And how can that Creature be happy, which has not its Satisfaction but out of God?

O blessed God, may this never be my Case. May all my Resolutions be directed by thy Law.

May my Dependance be on thy Blessing, and my Will be always ready to embrace whatever Effect thou ſhalt give.

May my daily Comfort be in thy holy Will being done; and may this Comfort be ſo truly ſolid, as to chase away all Uneasiness, and ſubdue all Passions.

In the Midſt of all Disturbance and Distrefs may the Remembrance of thy Will recover all into a Calm.

In thy holy Will is the Bliss of the Saints: May this Happiness now begin in me; may it go on ſtill encreaſing, till it come at length to be finished in the Glory of the Bleſſed. Lord, thy Will be done.

Grant, O Lord, I beseech thee, that this may be the settled Disposition of my Mind; that whatever thwarts my Inclination may not raise in me any Passion, but be presently embraced, as the Occasion of my acknowledging my Subjection to thee, and practising that ready Obedience I profess. Grant in this I may daily shew what my Religion is; for all other Pretensions are vain, if there be not a Heart that can submit to thee. This is the practical Worship of God; and, without this, the rest is little better than a Form. For what is all other Homage, if thy Will be not received and adored? Let it then be thy Mercy to me, that, in this Manner, I may every Day give Proof of being a Christian, in readily and chearfully embracing whatever I know to be thy Will.

And since thou, O blessed Jesus, hast taught me, that doing the Will of thy Father is the sure Way to Heaven; and, by thy Example, hast shewed me how to receive the bitterest Cup from his Hand; undertake now to be my Advocate in this great Affair, and obtain for me such effectual Grace, that, in the Spirit of an humble and peaceable Submission, I may receive all Appointments from the Hand of God. Let me know no more what it is to murmur, to be impatient or dejected; but in all Occurrences, though the most disagreeable, help me to overcome Nature, and to find Peace in the Will of God. Thus, O Jesus, may it be with me in all Kinds of Troubles and Difficulties of this Life; in Reproaches and Disgrace, in Disappointments and Losses, in Pain, Sickness, and also in the Agonies of Death. May the Spirit of the Cross carry me on and support me under all these Trials; and in this same Spirit may I surrender my Soul into thy Hands. O blessed Jesus, stand then by me, shew Mercy to thy Servant, and powerfully help me.

Rash Judgement.

Observing a great Weakness in myself, to the Prejudice of my Neighbour, and much more to my own; I now come to confess it with Humility before thee, O God, and to implore thy Grace for my Amendment.

My

My Sin is in being ever forward, in passing rash Judgement against my Neighbour, and letting every ordinary Occasion be enough with me to condemn him of Indiscretion, Folly, and Sin; so that scarce any Passion can happen, or any Relation can I hear, but I am presently setting myself for Judge, and pronouncing Sentence, as Passion, Affection, Aversion, Inclination, or some uncertain Guess happens to direct me.

This, O God, I confess to be a great Sin; because it is thou art the Judge of all, both the Living and the Dead; and it is an Usurpation in me, to undertake to judge any of my Fellow-Creatures, who am one of those unhappy Criminals who am to be judged. If I cast but my Eyes upon myself; I see Evidence of Guilt, for which I have Reason to apprehend the Justice of thy Sentence against me; and what a sinful Madness must it then be in me, to busy myself in rashly judging others, who am myself an Offender, and expect to be judged by thee?

How great an Injustice must I likewise very frequently commit; since, to pronounce an equitable and just Sentence, the Cause must be truly stated, and all its Circumstances be duly weighed? And how seldom or never am I thus qualified for judging, who pass my Judgement, without knowing Half the Cause: How often do I pronounce, when the most material and determining Circumstances are hid from me? When I have nothing but some Mistake, some imperfect or malicious Information, for the Ground of all that Evidence I seem to have within myself?

O God, I must own this to be too often my Method; and that, while I conclude with so much Rashness, I must certainly fall under the Guilt of a manifold Injustice, and often sentence those as Criminals, who, before thee, are wholly innocent.

And, how far is this from that Rule of doing to others as I would have others do to me? Where I am concerned, I would have none speak in the Cause but only such as understand it; and, as for others, who take Things by Halves, or know but one Side, or judge by Inclination, I presently discern the Injustice of their Proceeding, and wonder at, as well as resent the Injury

they do me. Thus knowing am I, where the Case is my own: But, when it is my Neighbour's, then I do the very Thing I reprehend in others, and seem not to see now, any Danger of being unjust.

This, O God, I must confess to be a great Partiality, and sinful Blindness, since I have Reason enough to know the Danger; and there is nothing but Rashness, Presumption, and Uncharitableness, which shut my Eyes against it.

And how much do I offend in this against Charity, whilst, instead of interpreting every Thing in the more favourable Sense, I generally put the worst Construction; and there judge my Neighbour under Guilt, where, had I any true Love for him, I might easily find Ways to excuse him?

Thus am I severe and uncharitable, in what belongs to others, and let my own Suspicions or Fears be enough to frame a Judgement against them. But, while I take this Liberty, yet, I must confess, I know the Fault of it: I know it is what thou hast forbidden. I know my Redeemer, Jesus Christ, has commanded all his Followers, *not to judge*; and, while he gives this Encouragement to those who *judge not*, that *they shall not be judged*, it is very plain what is his Sentence against those that *judge*, that, *with the same Judgement they judge others, they themselves shall be judged*. Thus has he declared in Terms against such as without Charity judge their Neighbour.

O God, how unhappy then must my Condition be, if all the Severity, with which I have judged my Neighbour, is to fall on my own Head? What Hopes have I left for Mercy, who, in this Point, have judged without Mercy? And yet thou, O Lord, hast pronounced this positive Sentence, and from thee there is no Appeal.

No Appeal, O God, but to thyself; and therefore before thy Throne I now prostrate myself, with all Humility acknowledging all my Sins wherein I have rashly judged my Neighbour. I confess all my Uncharitableness and Injustice in this Kind; and it grieves me from my Heart, that, having so strict a Precept against it, I should thus transgress thy Law and provoke thy Displeasure against me. But, knowing how infinite thy

thy Mercy is to such as sincerely seek it, behold, I come now with a Sense of my Unworthiness, but with a firm Hope in thy Goodness, beseeching thee to forgive all these my Sins: Forgive me, O Lord, forgive me all my Presumption and Rashness; Forgive me all the Injury I have done my Neighbour within my own Heart; and, from my Heart, I beg that the Plenty of thy Blessings may be poured forth upon all those whom I have any Ways wronged; that so what is wanting in me may be abundantly recompensed by the Effects of thy Goodness towards them. Forgive me, O Lord, who am the Offender, and give a Blessing to them whom I have rashly condemned.

But, with this Mercy, let thy Grace, O Lord, descend upon me, to prevent the Return of all such Rashness. I have here acknowledged the Greatness of the Guilt, and now beg, from my Heart, I may never more fall under it.

For this End, I beseech thee, I may ever have a lively Remembrance of this Truth, that not I, but thou, O Lord, art judge of the Universe, and before thee, and according to thy Judgement must every one stand or fall.

May I likewise at all Times remember the Uncertainty of my own Judgement, and the frequent Mistakes I have been under where I seemed to have Demonstration.

May I likewise remember how unqualified I am for judging my Neighbours Words and Actions; the full Evidence of which being only from the Sight, or Knowledge of the Heart, they can only be judged by thee with Truth, who art the Searcher of the Heart.

May I likewise remember the strict Command thou hast given to all, *Not to judge* before the Time; but to wait till thou shalt reveal the hidden Things of Darkness, and manifest the Secrets of Hearts.

May, likewise, the Fear of thy Judgements make me very cautious in this Point, since I cannot judge my Neighbour, but my Severity will encrease the Terrors of thy Judgements against me: And, as thy Apostle assures me, by judging others I shall condemn myself.

Thus, O God, may the Memory of these Truths put a Restraint upon my Thoughts, that I may be ever careful of judging my Neighbour. Take from me, I

beseech thee, all Positiveness and Confidence in my own Apprehension of Things, and give me both Discretion and Grace, to suspect the Truth of all those Thoughts which are in Disfavour of my Neighbour.

- Here, O God, let thy Commands and Threats awaken my Fear; let my own Experience put me in Mind how deceitful my Certainties are; and let all join together in keeping my Judgement in a total Suspence, even when I seem to have Evidence before me.

This, O Lord, is what thou commandest, and, I know, my only Interest is in being obedient to thee. Grant, therefore, that I may not contrive my own Ruin where thou hast mercifullly provided against it. Grant I may follow the Ways of Charity which thou hast so strictly enjoined us, and, without which, all whatever I do besides will be in vain. Thou hast sufficiently taught me how to find Mercy by shewing Mercy. If this be not in my Power, all other Ways; yet it is always in my Power to shew Mercy in judging of my Neighbour with Charity.

This then, O God, I ask of thee, that, in whatever concerns my Neighbour, I may not permit Disaffection, Passion, Envy, Partiality, or any Dislike, to direct my Judgement, nor consult the common Reports of the World; but only take Advice with Charity; and since this, in all doubtful Cases, will not allow the worst Construction where a more favourable may be had, grant I may hearken to Charity, and seek, at all Times, the best Interpretation that Things will bear. And if seeming Evidence at any Time appears, so as scarce to leave Place for Doubt, yet still, O God, let this be my Practice, to suspend all positive Judgement; and only to say. *It appears so to me;* since this is as far as common Evidence can go. Thus I desire others should do in what concerns me; and may this be my Rule, as often as the Concerns of others come before me.

But then, O God, I must here beg thy Help against all those working Imaginations in which I seem to censure my Neighbour: Some of these are very subtle and quick; some without Reflection; some seem like busy Impertinencies; and, the greatest Part of them, such as I cannot truly discern what they are, and how far they

they may be sinful I know not. Against these I implore thy Help, because I have Reason to fear them. For, although I knew it is *judging rashly* of my Neighbour that thou hast forbidden, and not fearing, *doubting*, or *suspecting* where there is Reason; yet, since I do not with Certainty discern the Compals of my own Thoughts, and they may very easily exceed, while I, through Neglect or Passion, may not observe the Excesses, I have Reason to desire thy Assistance; that, by thy Grace, I may be ever upon the Watch, and give no Liberty to such Imaginations, which may be very injurious to my Neighbour and myself. Help me in this I beseech thee, O God, and deliver me from a censorious Temper; I see very plainly the great Danger of it, and that into many Sins it must unavoidably lead me, if I indiscreetly give Way to it. Let thy Grace, therefore, be here my Help against Inclination, and give me Strength to stand against it. Let Charity be ever my Director, in putting the best Colour on whatever Concerns my Neighbour; and whenever any Thing occurs, which seems not capable of a good Construction, let me then shut my Eyes and turn my Thoughts to better Objects; and not run the Hazard of ruining my Soul, by busying myself in what does not concern me.

Not to judge by Passion, but Reason.

I Here render thee Thanks, O God, for the Light of Reason which thou hast given me. I own it to be a great Blessing, and that it may be serviceable to me to the best of Purposes, not only temporal but eternal. And, while I see some unhappily deprived of it, I have still more Reason to humble myself in the Acknowledgement of a Mercy, of which, through my Sins, I am so unworthy.

But observing, O God, that, having this Guide to direct me, I very often do not follow it, but am led along by other false Lights, setting them up for the Light which thou hast given me: Observing again, that I often prostitute my Reason to my Passions, and employ its whole Strength in pleading such their Causes

Causes as are wholly unwarrantable ; nay, observing that my Will applying my Judgement to what Things, and as far as she think, fit, makes in it what Impression she pleases ; and then, after all, excuses herself as being led by that which God has given her for her Guide, and thus is very culpable where she pretends to be innocent : Observing this, I have great Motives for imploring thy Grace to my Assistance, since there must be a Necessity of great Delusions where the Light is thus smothered ; Darkness is chosen instead of Light, and Deceit lies unsuspected under such a plausible Disguise.

O God, how almost numberless are the false Steps I have taken by these Means ; since, if I look back, I cannot find any one evil, rash, indiscreet, passionate, or unreasonable Thing I have ever done, but I have always had some Colour of Reason to encourage and carry it on. If Sloth or Vanity were to be indulged, I have always found Reasons for so doing. If Inclination led me to say or do some spiteful or uncharitable Thing, I ever had Reasons to promote it. If Interest inclined me to what is unjust, I have still had Reasons to encourage it.

Thus, O God, it has been with me throughout my whole Life. And now, at present, whatever I undertake, or whatever Method of Life I follow, I confess I seem to have Reasons for what I do : But there seems likewise such a Mixture of Inclination, Self-love, or Interest, &c. that when I strictly call myself to an Account, I have scarce any Assurance, whether it be solid Reason, or some Passion, that governs me.

Upon this Experience of my Ways, I now present myself a Petitioner to thee, imploring, with all the Earnestness of my Soul, thy holy Grace to direct me ; because I see now plainly, that, notwithstanding all my Reason, I have no Security of acting according to Reason, except thou art pleased to assist me by thy heavenly Light ; for, without this, all my Light will be nothing better than Darkness.

Assist me therefore, O God, I beseech thee, and teach me to discern true Reason from the Pleading of Inclination, Self-love, and Passion. For all these, nay and

and every Weakness, to which I am subject, have their Reasons, and press them so strongly from so many Heads, that I am very often at a Loss; and do not discover, whether they are the Truth of Reason or only Deceit. And hence how many indiscreet, foolish, and unreasonable Things am I led into, under the Colour of doing what is reasonable!

Consider me, therefore, O God, for my Case seems worthy of thy Compassion: For what will my Reason avail me in these Circumstances, if I do not know, which is the Light thou hast given me, and cannot discern it from Counterfeits? For though, in following that, I go right; yet if I am mistaken, and follow any other, instead of it, I certainly go out of the Way, and this most commonly, with the Danger of Sin: Wherefore, acknowledging here both my Weakness and Unhappiness before thee, I beseech thee, O God, to take me into thy particular Protection, and undertake to be my perpetual Guide; for without Thee, I confess, I have no Security in walking aright!

Deliver me, O God, if it be thy blessed Will, from all Positiveness, and too great Confidence in my own Judgement and Reasoning; teach me ever to fear myself, and to let my whole Dependance be in thy Guidance. For this End, I here declare, my Trust must not be in my own Abilities, but in thee; and now beg, that, for the future it may be my constant Practice, to ask thy Light and Assistance, as often as I am to reason, consider, debate, or come to any Resolution, in whatever concerns myself or my Neighbour.

This, O God, may I ever do, that so, the Light of thy holy Grace directing me, I may never determine, resolve upon, advise, or undertake any Thing rashly.

Help me likewise, O merciful God, in the right Use of all good Principles, that I never make a wrong Application of them, that I never wrest them to the Defence of what is unlawful or not expedient; for these I know must be very dangerous Errors, and difficult to be reformed, which seem to rest upon so good a Foundation.

Defend

Defend me from the Violence or Deceit of Passion, of Inclination and Self-love, and give me Grace to discern, or at least to suspect all the false Reasonings, which these make Use of in their own Defence. This must be thy Gift, O God, for I confess my Weakness to be such, that my Judgement is often corrupted by Inclination, and I judge more by Favour than by the Force of Truth; and what can I do in this, Case if thou, O Lord, dost not help me, for this I fear, is the Error of every Day!

Let thy heavenly Light, O God, likewise direct me against all the Delusions or Mistakes, from Education or Custom. These, I know, make very strong Impressions; and it is not easy to discern the Error of that, which, by Length of Time, is thus become familiar, and it is much more difficult to be persuaded to relinquish it. To how much of this I am subject, I cannot tell; and hence I ask nothing in particular; but this general Petition I make to thee, that thou wouldest vouchsafe me Light to discern, and Strength to overcome whatever favourite Errors I maintain, whether as to Truth or Practice, which have gained upon me, either by Custom or Education. I have seen in others a wonderful Blindness of this Kind, in Things of the greatest Concern; and this Blindness unhappily joined with the Persuasion of seeing very well, by which the most considerable Evils have become irremediable: And O God, how do I know, but in some other Way this may be my Case? But if it be so, thou knowest it, O Lord, and I beseech thee, not to leave me in Blindness of any Sort, but mercifully to open my Eyes, and to help me in correcting whatever in me is yet unreformed.

I repeat the same Petition, as to all practical Errors, grounded upon Authority and Example, or on their Principles, with whom I converse. These, I fear, are many; because I know how very easy Nature is in receiving what is agreeable to it; especially where there appears so much of Weight to recommend them. But whatever they be, I most humbly beseech thee, to discover them to me. Take from me all Adhesion to them, and permit them not to usurp upon my Reason.

Clear

Clear this inward Light in me from all Kinds of Corruption ; purify it from all those Clouds and Vapours which hinder it from discerning the Truth of what is before it ; and never permit it to be bribed by Inclination, or to plead in Favour of that, which it ought to condemn.

But what I, above all, ask of thee, is true Simplicity of Spirit, and an upright Heart. For observing the many Ways there are of being deceived, I cannot but apprehend the Occasion of all such Deceit proceeds from the Corruption of our Hearts, and that this is the Reason of our not discerning the wrong Judgements we make ; nay hence, I fear, we shall be inexcusable in many of our Sins of Ignorance ; since our own Corruption taking away the Light of Discerning according to Truth ; and this being our own Fault, who cannot but fear that all the sinful Ignorance, the Consequence of such Fault, will be severely charged upon us ; since whatever we pretend, of being deceived, the Truth is, we have deceived ourselves ?

Wherefore, I beseech thee, O God, to give me an upright Heart, a Heart which favours none of that Corruption, to which Nature inclines, but plainly considers every Thing, as it is delivered by thee, and stands recorded in thy Gospel, and is afraid of all those Gloses, which corrupt Wit and Example put upon them. Give me a Heart thus sincere and pure, and then, O God, though I am very weak of myself, yet knowing how acceptable this is to thee, I cannot but hope in the Assistance of that Light, by which thou leadest the Just, and that by this I shall be preserved from all sinful Delusion. Give me, O God of Mercy, a sincere, pure, and upright Heart ; for to such thou communicatest thy heavenly Light.

D I S C R E T I O N .

I Acknowledge, O God, many Blessings received from thy Hand, for which I here render hearty Thanks to thy Goodness, who art thus merciful to me, an unworthy Sinner. But knowing the best Gratitude to consist, not in Words, but in the good Use of what I have received

received, I now come to make my Petition to thee, for an Addition of thy Favours, in the Grant of that Gift which seems necessary for the good Use of all the rest, and that is, for the Gift of Discretion.

For, to own here my Weakness before thee, I confess, O Lord, for want of this, instead of using aright, I abuse all thy Blessings; so far, that there is neither Gift of Nature or of Fortune, of which I do not only often lose the Benefit I might make, but likewise very often turn to Sin. It is the Want of this makes me unhappy, in the midst of many Blessings; and amongst the many Difficulties, Troubles, and Uneasiness of this Life, the greatest Part is what I bring upon myself, through my ill Management and Indiscretion.

Seeing so much Evil from myself, I am convinced of my necessary and continual Dependance on thee, my God; I am cenvinced both my Sins and Misfortunes will be multiplied to the End of my Life, if thou, O Lord, art not pleased to assist me, and, by the Spirit of Discretion, teach me to prevent the Occasions of them.

Grant, me, therefore, O God, this Petition: I do not ask for the Wisdom of the World, which reaches not beyond what is earthly, and is the Benefit only of a Moment: But I ask for spiritual Discretion, by which I may be taught to manage all the Circumstances of Life aright, whether prosperous, or such as are uneasy to me, and learn to turn all thy Gifts to the best Account, and thus be wise to Salvation.

Give me this Discretion, in the first Place, as to the Use of all temporal Blessings, such as Health, Time, Plenty, Reputation, Success, &c. These are Gifts which may be all serviceable to Eternity; and, if abused, must be the Encrease of Judgement; and how easily, even to the Loss of the Soul? Instruct me, O Lord, in this Point, and give me Grace that I may not only consider how to turn thy Blessings to my present Satisfaction, but to make it my Study, how to answer those Purposes here, for which thou hast given them, and how to gain Eternity by them.

The same I ask as to all the Trials of Life, and whatever Scourges thou art pleased to send. These by ill Management, may be made the Occasion of many

many Sins, and by a better Use, may be the Improvement of the Soul, and so many Steps towards Heaven. Grant me, O God, the Grace of this good Husbandry; that I may not let all that be lost, or go for nothing, which is capable of being made the Purchase of an eternal Kingdom.

The same Petition I make to thee, O God, as to my Words; that I may know when, and in what Manner to speak, and when to be silent. This would be much for the Peace of my Soul, could I obtain this Discretion; it being the Want of this which brings me into frequent Quarrels, and uncharitable Disputes, with my Neighbours, which creates Variety of Uneasiness with those, with whom I ought to keep a better Correspondence, and is the Occasion of daily Sins, such as are known to thee, O God, and ought to be daily lamented by me.

Wherefore I now beseech thee, O merciful Lord, to remedy all this Unhappiness in me. Give me Discretion for the right Management of my Tongue; let it no longer be at the Command of every little Passion, groundless Jealousy, idle Imagination, or peevish Humour, much less of any sinful Inclination: It is enough, O God, that I have been hitherto so unwise: Now, from this Time, let thy holy Grace and Discretion govern me. Let me now, not only consider what I have a Mind to say, but always ask, whether it be according to Discretion to speak, whether it be just and reasonable, and well-pleasing to thee, my God. For having thee for my God and my Guide, and my Profession being to follow thee, I am bound to consult thy Will in all Things. And it is impossible for me not to say many indiscreet, foolish and sinful Things, if, neglecting thee, who art the only true Wisdom, I let my Tongue be at the Command of every vain, exceptious or busy Humour, that desires to set it at Work. Deliver me therefore, O God, from this Indiscretion, and help me to be more wise.

Teach me likewise, O God, to be discreet in all Manner of Conversation; that I may in every Kind, be under the Restraint of a discreet Moderation; that I may not be prevailed on by Design, Flattery, or ill Example,

Example, to say or do more than becomes my Profession of a Christian, and the particular Character I have in that Profession. I know my Weakness, and how easy it is to exceed in these Circumstances, whilst that which is present is too apt to stifle the best Principles: But help me, O God, here I beseech thee, and keep me within Bounds, that I take no undue Liberties; that I govern my Tongue; that I give Offence to none; that I follow no ill Example, but do all to Edification.

For better Security in this, direct me, I beseech thee, in the Choice of my Company, and in this teach me to be discreet: I am sensible, this is a Matter of Concern, and it may very well be, that not only my temporal, but also my eternal Well-being depends on this very Point. Grant therefore, O God, I may not here give the whole Choice to Inclination, Humour, or some superficial Agreeableness, and rashly go on, where these lead me. No, my God, if thou hast any Mercy for me, let not this be; for I know there is no surer Way to Disorder, Folly, Irreligion, and Ruin, than to be indiscreet in this one Point alone. Teach me therefore, O God, to be more wise, and suffer me not to hazard all that ought to be valuable to me, by following a Humour which looks not beyond a few Hours, and leaves Eternity as much to the Venture, as if there were no Faith to over-rule it.

I ask of thee again, O God, that I may be discreet in the Management of all that belongs to my State; that I may be laborious and watchful, in satisfying every Part of my Duty; that it suffer in no Kind either through Neglect or excessive Solicitude. Preserve me from all rash Undertakings; from being too busy in what does not belong to me; and teach me so to bear the Burthen of my State, that no Sort of Discouragement may lessen that Diligence in me which Duty requires.

Grant likewise, O God, I may be discreet in every Choice I am to make, and in all Busines, not engaging in any Thing rashly or upon Humour; but consulting with the most experienced, and duly weighing all Circumstances, and petitioning for thy Direction:

rection: Thus may I ever endeavour to prevent all just Occasions of being wise too late, or buying it at too dear a Rate.

A like Discretion I ask in the Government of all my Inclinations, Desires, Affections, and Passions. The Trouble, Mischief, and Sin of these, if not duly moderated, I see too plainly, so far as to dread the Experience; I see them to be Monsters, to be Madness, to be the most effectual and surest Instruments of the Devil. Hence I implore thy Mercy, O God, for my Protection: I ask thy Grace to direct and strengthen me, that I may not rashly expose myself to the Occasions of raising them; that I may not be too confident in the Liberty I give them, presuming upon my own Strength, and of being better able to govern them than others. This I know to be the Way to Sin; and therefore I beg, that my Heart may be always possessed with a Sense of my own Weakness, with a great Apprehension of my own Corruption, with a solid Distrust of myself; and hence, O God, may it be the constant Method of my whole Life, to labour in keeping all my natural Inclinations under Government, and not then only to think of governing them, when by ill Management and Indiscretion, I have put them almost out of my Power and provoked thee to leave me to myself.

My Weakness still obliges me to renew my Petitions to thee, O God, in this important Point; and I ask now, that I may do nothing upon Humour or Passion, or make any hasty or rash Engagements; for I know Humour and Passion not only to be Weaknesses, but to be very inconsiderate, blind and rash; and therefore that there must be the Hazard of daily Indiscretions, where these have any Command. Hence, I most earnestly beseech thee, that, by the Help of thy Grace, I may keep these natural Evils in due Subjection to Reason; that I may suspect all Resolutions and Proposals, when Humour or Passion are in Motion; that I may be jealous even of what then seems reasonable, and adjourn all final Determinations, till the Return of a Calm, when Things can be better examined, consulted, and debated. O God, how infinite are the

Follies

Follies of Judgement corrupted by Humour or Passion; and how unhappy must I be, if these no sooner begin to appear, but I presently take them for my Advisers, my Counsel and my Guides! What can I expect but Disturbance, Sin, and Misfortune, to be the Effect of such Folly! And yet how am I ever inclined and ready to take their Advice! But now, O God, since thou hast given me a Sense of this Weakness, give me likewise Grace to overcome it. Grant I may for the future, take a better Method, that by the Light of thy Grace, that by the Advice of Friends, and by calm, unbiassed Reasoning, I may prevent all these sinful Indiscretions, to which I must be otherwise exposed. Hear me, O God, in this Petition, and let me no more, by my own Rashness, be thee Contriver of my own Misfortune.

Deliver me likewise, I beseech thee, from all that Passion, which is the general Effect of espousing any Party; this blinds as much, if not more than any other, and Reason is seldom at Liberty where this prevails. Assist me therefore, O God, against this Weakness, and permit me to go no farther in any Cause, than solid Reason and Justice carry me: So far I may go without Fear; but if Passion gets the better, I confess, O Lord, from the blind Violence of this, I am in Danger of exceeding all that Discretion and Justice can approve. Help me therefore, O God, and mercifully keep me within the Bounds of Moderation.

Preserve me in all other Ways, where Indiscretion leads to Sin; and I most earnestly press this Petition to thee, because I observe amongst the many Evils which happen in the World, the greater and more considerable Part have their first Rise from some Indiscretion. From hence I have seen the Ruin of Peace, of Charity, of all good Order, of Reputation, of Estate, of Health, of Sobriety, of Religion, and, with too much Reason to be feared, of Eternity. And where so many Misfortunes attend, have not I Reason to fear myself, and to solicit for thy Help and Direction?

Behold then, O God, a poor, blind, and helpless Creature, in the Midst of many Dangers and Difficulties;

culties; I am not able to struggle with the least Part of them, and a great Part I do not so much as foresee, or apprehend, and yet I am as confident and presumptuous, as if I was secure against all Snares or Attempts. Such Boldness, joined with so much Weakness, I own, is a dangerous State, exposed to endless Indiscretions, if not prevented by thy heavenly Light: Take me therefore, I beseech thee, into thy Protection, direct me, lead me, make me sensible of Dependance on thee, and let not this unhappy Creature perish under the Effects of its own Blindness. I am blind and rash of myself, but, through thy Help, I may be enabled to discern all Things belonging to my State and Eternity.

Indifferency or Tepidity.

Amidst the many Weaknesses to which I am subject, there is no one gives me a more sensible Disturbance, than to see how unconcerned I am in the Affairs of Salvation, and how little Pains I take in the Performance of those Duties on which my Eternity depends.

And what can I now do here, but complain of my daily Stupidity and Neglects? How surprising are these, O God !

If I consult my Faith, I believe an Eternity to come, which requires, and is worth all my Care, to secure it in Happiness. If I look at my general Practice, I am industrious and eager in all that is temporal, and, when the Works of Eternity are to be done, I either put them by, or perform them with so much Sloth, as if they were something ceremonial that were to be done, but did not truly deserve my Care.

If I consider Hell, I believe it a State of endless Torments; I cry out with the Prophet, Who can dwell with everlasting Flames? And think, nothing can be done too much to escape them. If I consider my Practice, I am, in earnest, afraid of temporal Evils, and take true Pains to avoid them; but as for eternal, it is but very little I do to escape them, and this too with so little Concern, that it looks as if I neither feared nor believed them.

If

If I reflect upon what the Servants of God have done for the Love of their Redeemer, and for gaining Heaven; I applaud their Piety, I commend their Charity, I admire their Watchings, their Labours, and wonderful Patience in their Sufferings; I esteem them happy for what they did: But when I come to do any Thing, though for the same God and the same Crown, O my God, how poor are my Endeavours! How little do I labour to do like them; as if it were only their Interest, and not mine, to be faithful in thy Service.

When I consider, my blessed Redeemer, how much he did, how much he suffered of all Kinds, for the Salvation of Man; I see Motives enough, to press me on, to do whatever I am able to do on my Part. For when God does so very much, who is infinitely happy without Man; what is it the Sinner ought not to do for himself? And yet when I come to do any Thing, it is with so much Coldness, as if thou, my God, hadst given me no Encouragement to take Pains in it.

This, O God, is the Truth of my Case. And am not I now a miserable, unhappy Creature, who having so many Motives, so much Interest, so great a Necessity of seeking and serving thee, with all the Faculties, Strength, Industry, and Life of my Soul, have all this Strength, Industry, and Life spent upon this World, and have nothing but a cold Formality, and some ceremonial Professions, without Heart or Life, left for thee!

Ah, my God, look upon me in these unhappy Circumstances, and have Compassion on me. Give me a stronger Faith, a more lively Hope, and a greater Sense of my Duty. Let not the Vanities and Follies, and little Busines of this World, thus wholly take up and run away with my poor captive Soul; let not it pine and consume itself under the common Solitude or Troubles of it. For what will all this avail me? To how little Purpose will all this be, when a short Time, that runs away like a Dream, will lay me in the Dust and I shall have nothing left of all these Satisfactions and Troubles, but only the sinful Part, which will attend

attend me to thee, my God and my Judge, whom I have offended by them.

Wherefore I beseech thee, O God, to correct this strange Disorder of my Soul. As I believe an Eternity to come, so, by the Effect of thy Grace, may this make such an Impression in my Breast, that my inward Concern may bear some Proportion to it; that, as this is infinitely above all the Affairs of this World, so my Solicitude for it, may exceed all the Concern I have for earthly Things, which perish with Time.

Grant this, O merciful God, and let me no more be so unjust, as to seek Earth and Vanity with that Concern which belongs only to Heaven; and then to take no more Care for Heaven, than if it were a Trifle. I see, O God, the Injustice of this Way; I cannot see it without Shame; and I wish it would leave such a Confusion upon my Soul, that the continual Sense of it might give me no Rest, till by Prayer and good Endeavours I come to change the Method, and seek Heaven with the Solicitude which belongs to Heaven.

Help me, O God, to work this good Effect in my Soul, for till I come to find this Change, till I feel in my Heart such a Sense of Heaven, as to esteem the Possession of thee, the most valuable and only Good; till I desire it with the greatest Earnestness; till I am solicitous in seeking the most effectual Means that lead to it; till I am sincerely industrious in the Use of such Means; till I apply my whole Strength, my Watchfulness and Soul for this same End; till I can discover this, I fear I am in a sinful State; since the whole Method of my Life is an Offence against the highest Justice, even that Justice which is due to thee.

And what then must it be, if instead of this Earnestness, this sincere Desire, Watchfulness, Industry, and Labour, I find nothing but Coldness, Indifferency, Sloth, and a general Neglect? This must certainly be notoriously criminal, in the Transgression of this same Justice, and in the Violation of those two great Precepts wherein we are commanded to *love thee with all our Hearts*, and to *seek first*, and above all Things, *thy Kingdom*. And is this then a State becoming one, who lives in Hopes of Happiness?

O God

O God, thou seest how it is with me ; thou seest my Unhappiness, and knowest my Desires. Be so merciful then, I beseech thee, to thy Servant, as to touch my Heart with a Coal from the Altar, and communicate to it a new Life; such Life, as may banish from it all that Coldness and Want of Concern to which it is too visibly subject. I see the Sinfulness of this State, and now implore thy Grace to be delivered from it.

For this End, I beseech thee, to inflame my Soul with the Love of thee, my God ; quicken in my Heart a sincere Desire of possessing thee ; let the Zeal of Heaven damp all other Desires ; give me Life and Vigour in all the Duties of Eternity, and make me forward in embracing whatever is likely to advance me towards my last End.

May I be ever mindful, in all the Exercises of Eternity, to employ and raise my Endeavours, in Proportion to that weighty Concern ; and therefore, not to perform them with a lazy Indifferency, as in a Matter of no Moment, but by summoning all my Strength even according to that Precept, wherein thou hast obliged me to love thee with all my Soul, and with all my Strength.

To help me in this, let the Zeal for my Salvation, in the Sufferings of my Redeemer, be an Encouragement to my dull Soul ; let the Example of thy Servants excite me ; let Hell-fire be a Spur to me ; let the Uncertainty of Life, and the Certainty of never more returning, keep my Soul awake ; and let the short Duration of all temporal Things, shew me every Day the Folly of giving my Soul more to them than to Eternity.

This I earnestly beg of thy Mercy, because it is a Reproach to my Conscience, I see that I have all Life, Vigour, and Attention in every Thing belonging to this World, and am only then cold and dull, when I come to thee. Help me therefore, O God, to take away this Reproach from my Soul ; form to be alive in the World, to which I ought to be dead ; and to be dead to thee, to whom I ought to live, is exactly contrary to what I am taught in the Gospel of my Redeemer

deemer Jesus Christ, and therefore is an Indisposition of Soul, not to be tolerated in a Christian.

Heal me therefore, O God, and give me a new Spirit. Thou who madest the hard Rock become a Spring of living Water, who hast quickened Dust and Clay into a living Creature, who madest the dead Bones to live; by the same Power canst remove all the Dullness of my Soul, and quicken it again with a new Life. Shew this Power, O God, and now command my Soul to live, and so to live, that it may manifest its Life, in whatever belongs to thy Service, and the Work of my Salvation.

Let this Life, O God, appear in the good Endeavours I am to use on my Part; for here, I fear, is my great Fault; that I take no Pains, I do not strive to do what belongs to me; give me Grace, therefore, to be more careful and zealous in all the Exercises of Religion; that, as often as I perform them, I may apply all my Soul, and all my Strength, to perform them well; that I may with Vigour shake off all Heaviness, Coldness, and Distraction, and shew Life in whatever Thing belongs to thee, who gavest it. Thou, O God, art the Author of Life to me, and shall I employ all this to every Thing else besides thee? Deliver me, O God, from this Injustice.

J U S T I C E.

HERE, in thy Presence, I acknowledge many Debts, which I am obliged to satisfy; but being so very poor as I am; I make my Application to the Treasure of thy infinite Goodness, O God, with Hopes, that thou wilt consider my Necessities, and by thy Grace contribute to my Relief.

My first and greatest Debt is to thee, my God, in the Love, Fidelity, Homage, Service and Gratitude, which I owe thee: The least Part of this I am not able to satisfy, being a helpless and contemptible Worm; help me therefore, I beseech thee, and let it be the Effect of thy Grace in me, at all Times, to be mindful of this manifold Debt, to be ever desirous, and even solicitous, to discharge whatever Part is in my Power, and

O every

every Day to implore thy Goodness to my Assistance, both to enable me, and give me Discretion, for improving every Opportunity, that offers, for satisfying any Part of the many Duties which I owe thee.

I have a second Debt to my Soul, to superintend and be watchful in all its Affairs; to preserve it from all that can be injurious to it; from the Dangers and Occasions of Sin; from all that is infectious and poisonous, from Sin and from the worst of all Misfortunes, which is its eternal Separation from God, and being cast into Hell. I am, besides this, bound to procure it the Possession of that Good, for which it was created, and for this End, to lead it on, in all those Exercises and Ways, which thou hast prescribed for gaining this Inheritance. But what of all this can I do, without thy Help, O God? Help me therefore, I beseech thee, in satisfying this Part of Justice, in discharging this great Trust thou hast left with me.

I have a third Debt to my Body, to preserve and recover its Health, to decline whatever is evidently prejudicial to it, to restrain its undue Inclinations, and keep it within such Bounds, as may be proper for arriving to its last End. This is another Trust, which is attended with many Difficulties; but it being what Justice requires, I beg thy Grace, O God, that no Difficulties may hinder me, in being faithful to what is thus demanded of me.

I have another Debt to all those who have any Superiority over me, whether spiritual or temporal; so as to be wanting in no Submission or Obedience, which Authority can lawfully require: Be thou my Helper again in this Point, O God, and by thy Grace may I be enabled to give every one their Due: Permit no factious or stubborn Humour to prevail in me, to the Disturbance of Order and Peace, which I am bound to maintain. Let no Disagreeableness of those over me, or any undue Methods they take, provoke me to transgres my Duty; but let it be my constant Practice, rather to suffer, than do any Evil. This requires thy assisting Grace to support me in Moderation and Patience; therefore I now beg it of thee, that, whether in Government

vernment or Families, it may be my Rule to do this Justice.

I have another Debt to the Persons under my Charge which obliges me to a manifold Care, both as to Soul and Body: I beseech thee, in the first Place, to give me a due Sense of this Obligation; and then, O God, let thy Grace carry me on with such Watchfulness and Industry, as are necessary for the just performing it. There are many Duties under this Head, which a careless Eye may easily overlook, and Variety of Corruption will concur, for the passing them by with Neglect: But, O God, since this cannot be, but with the Transgression of Justice, I beseech thee let it not be my Sin.

I have another Debt, as to the Things under my Care; since whatever I possess, I only hold, as Steward under thee, O God, who art Sovereign Lord of all; and hence I am bound, first, as to the Inspection, Care, and good Management of all whatever is entrusted with me: Secondly, As to the employing or disposing of it, in answering those Ends and Purposes, for which it is deposited in my Hands; for as to both these, I am certainly to give an Account of my Stewardship. O God, are these the Demands of Justice? How little have I thought of them? How great has been my Neglect of them? Unhappy then am I in those very Things, in which I esteem myself happy, but let it be no more so, O Lord, I beseech thee: Assist me in this difficult Task, where Nature, and the World, contrive so many Ways to carry me out of the Ways of Justice. Grant me Strength and Discretion to stand against both, and may I now make it my daily Business carefully to inspect, and according to thy own Orders, to dispose whatever is in my Care; that so, when thy Justice shall call me to an Account, I may not be condemned, either of Neglect or of Waste. Help me, O God, in this, for, again I confess, I want thy daily Help.

I have another Debt, to those to whom I owe Money, and I heartily beg thy Grace, that I may make it my

constant Practice, to satisfy this, according to the best of my Ability, and never be wanting in it, through any faulty Omission. I know, how strictly thou hast commanded this, as to paying the Wages of all those that are hired: It is thy positive Precept; and thou hast declared by thy Apostle, that if any of these are defrauded, their Cry shall ascend before thee, to their Punishment, who are the Occasion of it. Permit me not, therefore, I beseech thee, O God, to wrong my Neighbour by this Injustice, and provoke thy Displeasure against me.

I know likewise, how great an Injustice it may be, in not paying others, where Money is due: Especially where the Want of such Payments is the Occasion of very considerable Inconveniences, both as to Business and Family, and too often Ruin. What the Consequences of such Omissions are, no body can tell but those that feel them: But so much of Injustice I see there is in Persons suffering for want of their own whilst others detain what is theirs, even against their Wills, that I beg thee to preserve me from doing them and myself so much Mischief.

I beg, that I may never thus unjustly eat of others Labours, and rob them of what is the Fruit of their Sweat, and ought to be the Supply of their Families. For what is this, but taking the Bread out of their Mouths, and living by Plundering and Oppression! O God, rather let me suffer any Inconveniences, than be thus unjust and cruel. Let Vanity and Appetite be denied in all their superfluous Demands, let State and Intemperance sink under all kinds of Self-denials, rather than my Neighbour, in the least, be wronged for their Support.

I hope, O Lord, if being engaged in Debt, I do what I am able to pay it; if I am truly desirous to do Justice; if I contrive all ways to spare from myself, and cut off all unnecessary Expences, that I may do Right to my Neighbour; I hope, in this Case, I satisfy a good Conscience, and shall find Mercy with thee for whatever is not in my Power to do. But if, instead of being solicitous to do this Justice, I still go on with Extravagancies, courting my own Humour; and letting

ting Idleness and Intemperance run me farther in Debt; if I maintain my Vanity at my Neighbour's Expence, and value not what Mischief I do him, so I please but myself; O God, how desperate then must my Condition be, since it is too plain I neither fear God; nor love my Neighbour: Since it is plain I have more Regard to my own Humour or Vice, than to all thy Commands, and that I seek no farther Happiness, than here to follow my own Ways! This is a Case to be lamented and feared; and, O God, I now implore thy Mercy to preserve me from it, that, heartily repenting of all past ill Management, I may be solicitous to discharge all the Debts I have contracted, and never, for the future, think of other Expences, but what I am able, and, without Delay take Care to satisfy.

As for all other Kinds of Justice, whether temporal or spiritual, whether in Regard of my particular State, or of any Trust or Charge I have undertaken, or in whatever other Way it be, I beseech thee, O God, that I may be faithful in it. And for this End, I beg of thee a true Sense of Justice, as far as it belongs to me; that I may not be deceived in this Point by the general Practice of others, or the common Method of the World; because I have too much Reason to fear, that Practice is very corrupt, and pretends to warrant many Things which will not be allowed by thee, wherefore I most earnestly beseech thee, to direct me by a better Light, even that Light which cannot deceive. Let this, O God, ever shine upon me, and be my Guide, amidst the many Difficulties and Temptations of this Life. These are very powerful in deceiving; and while, of myself I am so weak, and have so much present Interest in being deceived, what Security can I have against their Suggestions, if thou, O God, art not so merciful, as to command thy Light to shine upon me, amidst so much Darkness? Be a Guide therefore to me, I beseech thee, and suffer me not to be deluded by such Reasons, as are according to the World, but not according to thy Law. Give me Grace to examine and consider every Thing in such a Manner, as Justice requires, and not to think every Thing warranted, which I see done by others; since they being but few,

whom thou hast chosen, there cannot be many, whose Example is to be followed.

Grant likewise, O God, that having a Sense of that which is truly right and just, according to the Standard of the Gospel, I may have Resolution and Strength to follow it. And now here, O God, how great Reason have I to implore thy powerful Assistance against my own Weakness, and the many Temptations to which I am expos'd: Against the Temptations of Interest and Favour, of Dependance and Flattery, of Passion and Party, besides infinite others; which particular Circumstances lay before me? I must confess my Weakness; these press strongly upon me; and having many plausible Arguments, seemingly to prove the Reasonableness of what they pretend, I am in Danger of being carried away, where Justice obliges me to resist. Assist me therefore, I beseech thee, and let not Iniquity prevail against me; strengthen me against all these Temptations, that I never do any Injustice by their Persuasion. To give Ear to and follow them, is doing what thou hast forbidden; it is wronging my Neighbour, whom thou hast commanded me to love as myself; it is consulting some present Convenience, and for such Convenience, despising Eternity. Deliver me, O God, from all such Rashness, and may I rather choose to renounce all present Conveniences than hazard my eternal Lot, by doing what is unjust.

G R I E F .

Behold here a poor Petitioner, O God, who wants thy Assistance; but such is my Unhappiness, the more I want, the less able I am to ask for Relief; have Regard therefore to my distressed Condition, and, according to the Multitude of thy tender Mercies, have Compassion on me.

Consider my Circumstances, O God, and my great Weakness: See how low my Soul is sunk, and how heavy is the Weight that oppresses it, There is neither Light nor Comfort left within me; I am weak and helpless, and fall under my Burthen, if thou, O Lord,

dost

dost not shew Mercy and comfort me. Appear then in my Cause, O God, and be my Refuge and my Support.

I feel my Soul almost overwhelmed with Grief; but, from under this Weight and Darkness, I cry out to thee, O Lord, to be my Helper. Come then, O God of Mercy, and help me, though unworthy of the Help which I ask. Give me Strength at present against this Passion, that it may no longer prevail upon me; give me Strength against my own Inclination, that I may not lie down sullen or desponding, under the Trouble that oppresses me. I am sensible this is a great Weakness, and therefore I implore thy Grace, that, by this divine Aid, I may overcome Nature, and let Reason and Faith wholly govern in me.

And now, my Soul, consider, if thou canst, whether there can be any Reason for thee, thus to let Grief grow to this Excess.

It is true, thou hast had some Trouble befallen thee; and if thou canst find any Relief, there is Reason enough to seek it.

But tell me, will afflicting thyself in this Excess, be any Help to thee?

Will this take away, or remedy the Occasion of thy Complaints?

It will injure thy Health, weaken thy Memory, darken thy Understanding, and, if long indulged, will bring thee into such an ill Habit, as may never more be recovered.

Tell me then, can this be according to Reason, to indulge that which must certainly do thee Harm, and can do no Good?

Reason directs thee to use such Means as have any Likelihood of affording thee Help; but to add to thy own Misfortunes, whilst thou complainest of being already too miserable, this cannot be according to Reason.

Thou sinkest under thy present Burthen, because of its Weight and thy own Weakness: And must it not then be very unreasonable in thee, still more and more to disable thyself by immoderate grieving, and by the

same ill Management, every Day to add more Weight to the Burthen?

See then what thou dost; for thou art certainly doing an irrational Thing, and hast nothing but Humour, or the Violence of a blind Passion, to direct and encourage thee in it; and all the Benefits thou wilt have by it, will be to do thyself Mischief.

If thou goest on then in this Manner, thou renouncest thy Reason, which is to act like one that is mad: And much more thou layest by thy Faith, which is to act as an Infidel?

For, reflect a little: Does not Faith teach thee, that the Will of God must be done in all Things?

Does it not require thee, to bow down and submit to all his Orders?

Does it not prescribe thee, to bear with Patience every Trouble, and to humble thyself under the Scourge.

Does it not order thee, to take up thy Cross and follow thy Redeemer, and to learn of him how thou art to suffer?

Does it not direct thee to have Recourse to God in thy Affliction, and to seek from him both Comfort and Help in thy Trouble?

Does it not call upon thee, to lift up thy Eyes to that eternal Crown, which God has prepared for those that suffer?

Does it not teach thee, that Correction from God's Hand is an Argument of his Love, that by Tribulations the Just are purified; that they are the Proof of their Fidelity; that by them they are associated to Christ, their Head; and that, if they suffer with him, they shall be glorified with him?

Does it not hence require of thee to deny thyself, not to yield to thy Inclination; but instead of grieving to have Comfort, and even to rejoice in Trouble in Expectation of the Promises?

In this Manner Faith teaches thee; and thus they endeavour to do, who are directed by Faith.

But what dost thou, my Soul?

O my God, I confess, I follow neither Reason nor Faith

Faith; I neglect and smother both these Lights, and give Way to Passion, which is contrary to both.

I yield to Inclination and let this carry me on, without considering what is my Duty.

And if any Glimpse of it, through thy Mercy, strikes my Soul, yet I am too slothful to follow it; Passion or Humour still prevails, and I am careless as to every Thing that is really for my Good.

Thus I live, displeased with what thou hast been pleased to order; and my indulged Grief is a Rebellion against thy Will, O God.

Instead of seeking Help from thee, I make myself incapable of asking thy Help.

Instead of moving thee to Compassion, by my Affliction I provoke thy Anger, by my stubborn Impatience:

Instead of improving under my Trouble, I prevent all the Designs of thy Mercy, and even there add new Sins, where thy Goodness has given me an Opportunity of cancelling the old.

Thus, O God, while I profess myself a Christian, I go on in a Way contrary to what my Redeemer has taught; and such as cannot fail of being injurious both to Soul and Body.

This is my present State, more unhappy to me through my own Impatience and ill Management, than in that which is the Subject of my Complaints.

Help me therefore, O God, and mercifully deliver me from this Unhappiness.

Give me Grace to stand against my Inclination, and effectually to suppress my Passion.

Let me no more give Way to Grief, but learn now to embrace thy Will.

Let me now hearken to Reason, and no longer open my Breast to that, which can be to no other Purpose, but to do myself Harm. Let me now be under the Government of Faith, and not only submit to that, as best, which is thy Appointment, but likewise endeavour to make the best Use of it.

Teach me to receive Troubles, as the Portion of thy only Son, and of those who were chosen by him out of the World, to be his Friends as well as Servants.

Raise up my Heart in the lively Faith of eternal Happiness to come, and by the powerful Influence of this, may I find Comfort, and even rejoice in whatever may be a Means of securing to me that Inheritance.

All Kinds of Afflictions may be such Means; why then, my Soul, dost thou lie still and grieve, when, by good Endeavours, the very Subject of thy Trouble may help thee on towards Heaven.

Awake then, arise, take Pains, shake off this Passion, use some Violence with thyself; for thy Redeemer has taught thee, Heaven is to be so gained.

Θ God, who seest my Weakness and my Trouble, have Pity on me: Thou art the Comforter of the Afflicted, the Protector of the Orphan and Widow; to thee I appeal for Help. Shew Mercy therefore, I beseech thee, to thy Servant, and give me Grace to overcome my present Disorder. Assist me in throwing off Passion, which is so contrary to the Humility and Patience of the Gospel. Grant me some Portion of that better Spirit which appears through all the Passion of my Redeemer; and, as far as I am to suffer, let it not be any more with murmuring and rebellious Resentments, which is the Resemblance of Hell; but with that pious and humble Submission which is recommended in thy Gospel, as the best Expedient for gaining of Heaven.

Oppression, Melancholy.

Behold here, O God, a poor, unhappy Soul before thee, under many Difficulties of Spirit, such as deserve thy Compassion, and require thy Help. Look upon me therefore, I beseech thee, and do something for my Relief: For behold, O God, I am miserable.

I am miserable in the Weight which oppresses my Soul, and deprives me of all Comfort in those Clouds and Darkness which so often hang over me, and leave me without all inward Light.

In looking at nothing but my own Misfortunes, and forgetting the many Blessings of thy bountiful Hand, such as would make others happy, and oblige them to a cheerful Gratitude.

In busying myself with vain Imaginations, or lying still under a lethargick Sloth, as if I had no Power to move, and thus losing all the Advantage of the present Time.

In creating to myself Variety of Misfortunes by groundless Fears, and the working of a restless Fancy; and letting the Apprehension of what is not, rob me of the Comfort of whatever I enjoy.

In the Injury I do my Health, and making myself incapable of many good Offices, and even Duties which belong to my State.

In the many Disturbances I give myself by my jealous and exceptionless Temper; being ever ready to give the worst Turn to every Thing I hear or see; and this with as much Industry as if I had an Interest in making myself uneasy.

In the great Indisposition in which I am, as to all spiritual Exercises; so as to pray without Attention, and read without Benefit.

In the great Perplexity of Conscience, which is a continual Disturbance to me.

In the endless Temptations in which I am involved, there being nothing so secure or sacred, which is not attempted by my presuming and roving Thoughts.

In the Danger of seeking undue Means, upon the Pretext of finding Relief.

In not having Courage to undertake such Methods, as are for my Good, much less to persevere in the Use of them.

In indulging my Distemper, and every Day, by my Indiscretion, Sloth, or Affectation, adding Strength to that which is my general Hindrance in all Good both as to Soul and Body.

In wasting my Thoughts, Life, and Solitude upon my own Aggrievances, and neglecting the great Work of Eternity.

This, O God, is some Part of my Misery; and now I appeal to thy Goodness, to have Compassion on me, and to heal my distempered Mind. All that is within me, is subject to thee, and, if thou wilt, thou canst command me to be whole. But being so unworthy

unworthy a Sinner I cannot expect such miraculous Favours; and therefore I only petition for thy Help.

Help me, O God, I beseech thee, that I may have a due Sense of my Indisposition; and mercifully grant that I may never more wilfully yield to it, or, through my Fault, encrease it, since it must certainly be a great Fault in me, to promote whatever is so very injurious to me.

Grant I may be ever watchful against the first Approaches of it, and be jealous of all those Thoughts which insensibly draw me into it.

Give me new Life and Vigour of Spirit, that, in whatever Degree this Evil shall at any Time seize me, I may resolutely stand against it, and use all possible Means to disengage myself.

Grant, I beseech thee, that, in such Case, I may never lie still, and, through Sloth, give Opportunity to the Evil to grow upon me, but that I may start, as upon the Surprize of an Enemy, and, by Violence, strive to regain my Liberty.

Grant I may be afraid of all idle Amusements, as of a treacherous Enemy; and, as for all Kinds of terrifying or dejecting Imaginations, O God, I beg thy Assistance, that I may cast these off with the same Concern as if they were the foulest and most detestable of all Temptations.

Let me not here, O God, be drawn in, however innocent and unreasonable they may pretend to be; since I have too often experienced the Mischiefs that are ushered in by such Innocence.

Let me then be afraid of all that looks like Sloth, since this is both a Symptom and Effect of the Distemper, and can be no otherwise indulged, but with the Unreasonablenes of those, who make much of a Disease, while they complain against it.

Grant I may then summon all my Resolution, and even against Inclination, turn to some Business, Labour, or Employment, such as may require both my Hands and my Thoughts; and, O God, I beseech thee, let no lazy Suggestion of Sleep or Sloth, then take Place.

And

And when this cannot be, may I then be so wise as to choose such other Helps as can be had for removing afflicting and injurious Thoughts ; may I turn to Reading, Conversation, or Divertisement ; any Thing that is innocent, rather than sit still, and join with my Enemy against myself. But if, notwithstanding my best Endeavours, it so happens by thy Permission, that I cannot disengage myself, and remove the Weight that oppresses :

Then, O Lord, I most humbly beseech thee, let thy Grace help my Infirmitie, that I may receive it with the same Submission and Patience which I am bound to have in all other outward Troubles.

May I consider it as the Appointment of thy Will ; as the Execution of thy Justice against a Sinner ; as the Cross which thou art pleased I should bear ; as the Effect and Punishment of Sin.

Thus, O God, may I look upon every uneasy Thought, all the Heaviness and inward Oppression which I fel, and whatever else of Darkness, Temptations, or Errors perplex my Mind.

Henc, instead of Impatience or Dejection, may it be my onstant Endeavour to raise up my Mind from under such Weight, and look towards thee ; towards thee, O God, who exercisest thy Servants in such a Maner as thou pleasest, and appointest all for their Good.

My I, in all such Weights, consider thy holy Will ; and hat, as I am thy Creature, and a Christian, I am boud to submit to it with an humble and patient Mid.

And, if it be not according to Inclination, to be ths humble and patient, may thy Grace help me in taking Pains to be so ; and make me bow down to t' Ground, even when I am unwilling to stir, and, von my Knees, surrender myself to thy holy Will. ord, thy Will be done.

Nay, O God, I petition for thy Help in a farther Duty ; that I may not only submit with Patience, but even endeavour to receive with Comfort everyWeight, inasmuch as it is according to thy blessed Will ; because I know

I know it my Duty to rejoice in every Thing that is the Accomplishment of thy Will.

This, O God, requires thy assisting Grace; but since I find others, my Fellow-servants, and made of the same infirm Clay with myself, to have rejoiced in Tribulation, to have had Comfort in the Midst of the severest Torments, and the Terrors of Death, I hope I may so far obtain thy Help, as to find Comfort under my lesser Trials, which are nothing, if compared to what they suffered. Grant therefore, O God, this Grace to me also, though unworthy, that as often as my Heart is sinking, or oppressed with Horror and Darkness, I may then raise it with Vigour and Violence up to thee, and, offering to thee a Sacrifice of all I feel, endeavour to rejoice, and go on with Comfort under my Cross. O God, how happy should I be, could I make such an Offering of all my inward Trouble, and now begin to approach towards Heaven by that which hitherto has been to me so great an Hindrance!

Affist me, O God, I beseech thee, unde this my Infirmitiy, and let it not be to me a Sin. Deliver me from it, if it be thy blessed Will; but, if thou art pleased it should be still my Exercise, teach me O God of Mercy, and help me to bear it. Give me courage and Patience under all my Difficulties, that I neither offend through Impatience, nor fall into any Discouragement. Give me Discretion, and the true Wilom of thy holy Spirit, that I may let the Enemy take n Advantage of my Trouble; but that I may suffer ll in the Spirit of thy holy Son, and improve unde my Affliction. Strengthen my Faith and my Hope alidit all Temptations and Terrors; and, when all seem to be lost, let me then experience, by fresh Succours and Comforts, that thou art my God. Give me Grace or the Performance of every Part of my Duty, and help me to stand against all those Arguments which wold persuade me that what I do is to no Purpose. The knowest, O God, all my Uneasiness, my Weaknes and my Wants; forsake me not, I beseech thee, in my Distress, but have Compassion on me; take me into

into thy Protection, and support me according to my Necessities, and then deal with me as thou wilt. I ask neither for Ease, nor Comforts, nor Light, but entirely surrender myself into thy Hands: Lord, thy Will be done in me; carry me through whatever uneasy Ways thou pleasest; this one Thing alone I ask of thee, that thou forsake me not, but continue thy Helps ever to me, according to my Wants. Lord, thy Will be done in me: And now for the future, may I take all whatever Uneasiness I feel, as the fulfilling of thy Will.

S C R U P L E S.

MY Necessities oblige me to appeal to thee, O God of Mercy, and to lay before thee all my Complaints. Turn thy Eyes therefore towards me. I beseech thee, and have Regard to my Unhappiness.

My Soul is under great Disquiets; I have little Light or Comfort in all I do. I seek to have Rest in thee, but cannot find it. I endeavour to approach to thee in Prayer, but a heavy Darkness keeps me at a Distance from thee. I often propose by Repentance, to make my Peace with thee; but so many surprizing Difficulties perplex my Mind, that, instead of repenting, I find nothing but inward Disturbance and Confusion, and thus seem frustrated in all I proposed. I come likewise to the Table of my Lord, and, in those sacred Mysteries, hope to receive new Life; but even there, likewise, sacrilegious Fears profane that Place, and rob me of all the Comforts of that divine Ordinance.

Thus, O God, whatever I do seems all lost, and without Effect; Peace and Comfort are Strangers to my Soul; Fears, Terrors, and strange Apprehensions are my Entertainment Day and Night; my Thoughts are restless, and all those Helps which, by thy own Appointment, are Means of Comfort to all others, to me afford Matter for new Disquiets.

This, O God, is the State of my disordered Soul; unhappy in being subject to daily Uneasiness; but more unhappy in being deprived both of the Comfort and Benefit of all those Exercises and Devotions in which

pious

pious Souls receive the Enlargements of thy Grace and make their Approaches to thee.

And what now can I do, except thou, O God, wilt shew Mercy to thy Servant, and help me in this Distress? Give Ear then to my Prayer, O most gracious Lord, and grant my Petition.

Confirm me, I beseech thee, in my Desire and Resolution of being faithful to thee, and of carefully performing whatever my Duty demands of me; but, while I ask for Fidelity and Attention, deliver me, O most merciful Lord, from that excessive Solicitude which is so great a Disturbance to me, and from all my immoderate Fears, which are so dangerous a Snare to my Soul, and so often put me on the Rack.

And since I am so very often perplexed in Conscience, that I am almost in Despair, as to my present State, and, looking forward, I see no Hopes of doing better, I most humbly beseech thee to grant me the true Spirit of Obedience, that I may submit to their Direction, who, by thy Ordinance, are put over me; that, being helpless of myself, and not seeing the Way, I may receive the Benefit of their Conduct.

For this End I, with all the Earnestness of my Soul, beg of thee to take from me all Self-conceit, and too positive Adhesion to my own Thoughts; because I am very sensible, the Benefit of a Guide is lost where these Evils discompose the Mind; and I need no more, for being deprived of the Advantage of the best Advice, than to be too strongly possessed with my own Opinion.

In this Case therefore, where my Infirmity is such as to stand in Need of the best Advice, grant, I beseech thee, that I may not, through my own Fault, or Affection, render all Advice useless to me. If this has been hitherto one of my Weaknesses, I now heartily implore thy Mercy for the removing it; for I see it to be absolutely contrary to the Discipline which thou hast appointed for the Government of thy Faithful, and enough to obstruct all that Good thy Piety has designed in the Remedy of all my Distempers.

Since, therefore, it is so great a Temptation, so dangerous a Snare, it is plain I cannot hearken to it, but by being my own Enemy, in doing myself the greatest

greatest Prejudice, in the greatest of all Concerns, in the Government and Peace of my Soul. Help me therefore, O merciful God, and deliver me from all that Positiveness of Judgement, Affectation, or whatever else it has been, which has hitherto done me this great Injury, and even rendered ineffectual in me the most considerable of thy Mercies. Grant me a true Humility of Judgement, such as may make me easy in hearing and submitting, where thou hast commanded it for my own Good.

That I may be thus happy, grant, I beseech thee, I may be watchful against my own excessive Fears, and jealous of all their Suggestions, however conscientious and pious they may seem. For though there be a Fear, which is helpful to Salvation; yet, I see too, there are immoderate Fears very prejudicial to it, and such as I cannot follow, without being put out of, or hindered in the Way. For, when Fears go so far as to perplex and darken the Judgement, to sink the Spirits, cause great Discouragements, confound the Thoughts, and so far to question the Ordinances of God, as to suppose it unsafe to follow their Direction; it is very plain (judging of the Tree by the Fruit) that such Fears cannot be the Fear of the Lord, which is the Beginning of Wisdom; but the Fear of Weakness, the Root and Occasion of very great Indiscretions.

Wherefore I again repeat my Petition to thee, O God, and most humbly pray thee to deliver me from all such hurtful Fears, or, at least, so far to strengthen me, as to prevent my being deluded, or misled by them.

This I beg the more earnestly, because I know how unqualified I am, at the best, for making a right Judgement of Things of this difficult Nature, and how easily I am mistaken: And therefore, how much more must I be so, when my Mind is disturbed with Fears, and, by terrifying Apprehensions, put into Disorder; when working Imaginations confound my Thoughts, and I am under such Perplexity, that I know not how to distinguish between Shadows and real Evils? Being thus disturbed, how can I hope to judge aright? How can I hope it, when all the Faculties of my Soul, by which

which I am to judge, are discomposed; and quite unfitted for discerning any Thing before them,

This is certainly the Case: And how unreasonable then must my Proceedings be, not only, at such Times, to undertake to judge, but even to judge of such Matters as require the calmest Thoughts, and the most discerning Eye; and not only so, but even to question the Judgement of those who are both better qualified, and appointed by thee to judge; to dispute their Sentiments; to fear they are mistaken; and to appeal from their positive Judgements to my own Fears;

I must confess, O God, here is something very rash, presumptuous, and foolish in this, to set this Value upon my own distempered Mind, and so to give this the Preference to thy Appointments as to have no Confidence in whatever thou hast set over me, whenever they disagree with my Fears: This is disapproving thy Conduct, and then chusing a blind Guide. O God, I see the Folly of this Method, and that there is nothing in it, that can or ought to be depended on; and I cannot wonder at the ill Effects, I find in myself, of such ill Management; since it is but just I should thus pay for my bold Indiscretion, which, scrupling to submit to thy Orders, is but one Degree from despising thee.

It being thus with me, O God, I now here own all my Faults, my ill Management, my Rashness, my Indiscretion, my Pride and Positiveness; and I heartily lament all the ill Effects in me of this ill Method I have taken. I hope thy Goodness will not charge them all upon me, since thou knowest them to proceed from Weakness, and from an ill managed Desire of doing my Duty. Pardon me, however, I beseech thee, whatever Fault I have had in them, and now give me Grace to be more wise. Teach me to distrust myself, and much more my own Fears. Help me in moderating my Fears, and to regain a Quiet within my Breast. Compose my Thoughts, and bring under Government all my restless Imaginations. Teach me to fear, what deserves to be feared; to distrust, what ought to be distrusted, and there to rest with Confidence, where thou hast directed me.

Thus,

Thus, O God, I beg of thee to settle my inward Man ; that, having Peace within, I may be able to serve thee more faithfully, and find both Comfort and Advantage in the Exercises I perform. O merciful God, how happy should I esteem myself, could I obtain this Peace. Thou seest where my Fault is, and what my Weakness : Remedy both, I beseech thee ; I lay them before thee, and desire thy Help ; and I heartily implore thy Grace, that I may renounce all my own Ways, my Inclinations and immoderate Fears, and go on cheerfully and with Confidence, in the Ways wherein thou hast ordered me to walk. For if I know thy Will and thy Ways, and yet dare not trust myself in them, how can I say my Hope is in thee ? O God of Mercy, increase and strengthen my Hope, and give me such true Humility, that I may freely surrender myself, and there rest with Comfort, where thou hast appointed ; and let no Imaginations frighten me out of this Method ; for what is this, but to be frightened from thee ?

C O V E T O U S N E S S.

O God, who hast given this thy first and greatest Command, to love thee above all Things, infuse this Love I beseech thee, into my Heart ; may this alone there wholly rule, govern, and command ; and grant I may find the Effects of it, in having no other Inclination or Affection within me, but what is wholly subject to it, and strictly confined within those Bounds, which it prescribes.

O God, who, being the Creator, art likewise sovereign Lord of all ; and therefore hast the only Right of ordering and disposing all Things : Give me Grace, I most humbly beseech thee, that, as to whatever thou hast entrusted in my Hands, I may observe thy Orders, and only then think myself just and faithful, when I do what has been prescribed by thee.

And since, O God, thou requirest to be glorified in all thy Creatures, grant I may seek to glorify thee in as many as are under my Charge : That renouncing my own Inclination, and overcoming all immoderate Affection,

Affection, I may enquire after thy Will and dispose of and manage all Things in my Care, in such a Manner, as may contribute to thy Glory.

For this End, O God, while I return thee most hearty Thanks, for whatever Blessings thou hast bestowed upon me, I likewise most heartily beg thy Grace, that I may not set my Affections, in any immoderate Degree upon thy Creatures, nor love thy Gifts, in such an undue Manner as to injure that Love, which is due to thee, the Giver.

This I ask now, in a most particular Manner, in regard of Possessions and Money; because thou hast taught me, that great is the Sin of Covetousness, and many are the Sins into which it leads every Soul that is subject to it. Thou hast declared to me, by thy Apostle, that Covetousness is the Sin of Idolatry, which is worshipping the Creature for God; that it ought not so much as to be named; that they, who will grow rich, fall into Temptation, and the Snare of the Devil, and many hurtful Desires which drown Men in Perdition; that covetous Persons are some of those Sinners, who shall not possess the Kingdom of God. Thus am I taught by thee, O God; and having learned from thee, how detestable it is, and how much to be feared; help me by thy Grace, and give me Strength to avoid it; so that, being ever watchful against the Guilt, I may be so happy as to escape the Punishment.

How unhappy shall I be, if I make the Encrease of thy Blessings, the Encrease of my Unhappiness? And yet thus it must be, if having sufficient Plenty, wherewith to relieve the Poor, and, by other Works of Charity, to purchase Heaven, I let the Love of Money tie up my Hands, and rather venture Eternity, than lessen my Stock.

For what is this, but to give Money the Preference? It is a great Injustice, in setting Earth above Heaven, and valuing more the Convenience of a Moment, than the Goods of an eternal Duration. And can there be a Place in Heaven for a Heart so unjust? O God, I fear, this Judgement is already passed; and that the Soul will never come to the Possession of thee, who, having

having the Inheritance offered upon such easy Terms, will not yet accept them.

Wherefore, I beseech thee, O God, deliver me from this Injustice ; and may there never be found in me such an unquestionable Evidence, that I do not love thee. Give me rather a Heart to make earthly Goods serviceable to Eternity, and to contrive all Ways to spare for so great a Good. Thou hast sufficiently declared, how acceptable Alms-giving is to thee, and how prevailing all Charity is for the obtaining thy Mercy. And what then can I expect less, than to have the Gates of Mercy shut against me, if, having enough to spare, my Heart is so linked to my Money, that it will part with none, upon these Terms, of engaging thy Mercy to me ? Ah, unhappy Possessions ! Unhappy Riches, if my Heart be so possessed with these, as even then not to open my Hands, when the giving but an inconsiderable Part may be the Purchase of Heaven !

But more unhappy still, if the Eagerness of Gain puts me upon unwarrantable Ways : If it prevails upon me, to do any Injustice, to deny a Right to wrong my Neighbour, to defraud or over-reach any in Contracts or Business, to oppress or be severe with the Persecuted, the Oppressed, the Hireling, or the Poor ; to cheat, where Ignorance or Oversight gives me Opportunity of doing it ; to take Bribes, to the Pre-judice of Truth or Right : If the Eagerness of Gain puts me upon any of these or other such unjust Ways, I must confess my Unhappiness then to be in an Extreme ; since Covetousness cannot well go farther, than to trample upon the known Commands of God for the Love of Money.

Wherefore, I again here most earnestly beseech thee, O God, to deliver me from this Vice. Permit me not, O most merciful Lord, to be blinded with this Passion. I see the Unreasonableness, I see the Injustice, I see the Idolatry of it ; and yet so deceitful I know it to be, that it hides all this Wickedness so far from those, who lie under the Guilt; that they have Pretext and Colours, to make all look like innocent.

Shew

Shew Mercy therefore, O God, to thy Servant, and preserve me from this deceitful Evil. Preserve me from all Degrees of Covetousness, and suffer not my Heart to be a Slave to Dust. Make me industrious in providing for the Necessities of this Life; but having done this, let me entirely depend upon thy fatherly Providence, and never attempt any Thing unjust or fraudulent, for securing me against the Apprehensions of Want.

And may his Confidence in thee, my God, be so far strengthened, that I may never be afraid of sparing for the Relief of the Poor: Let no imaginary Fears of this Kind keep my Purse shut to the Demands of Charity; and, whenever they occur, let the Fear of losing Heaven expel the others from my Breast. Let this Answer to them be always ready upon my Lips: *He deserves not Happiness, who will not hazard something for it.*

But where is the Hazard, when thou hast made such Promises to such as practise this Charity? Does not all depend upon thy Blessing? And is there not more Reason to hope for this, where such Works of Charity are performed, as most certainly engage thy Goodness to their Protection? To be charitable, then, is the Way to thrive, rather than to want; and he, that lets his Fear of wanting take Place, shews too plainly, that his Faith is not sound.

I beg therefore, O God, that I may give no Admittance to these deceitful Fears. Since, if I do, the Case is too evident, I deceive myself; and that in this one Thing is the Demonstration of a covetous Heart, a Heart that loves Money more than God; of a Heart whose Happiness is so fixed in what it possesses, that it cannot be persuaded to lessen this, in Hopes of any Happiness to come.

And what State now of Soul can be worse than this; where in one Passion is the Complication of so many Evils? A Want of Faith, a Want of Hope and Confidence in God, a greater Solitude and Love of Money, than of God, a readier Service and Obedience paid to it, and this too commonly in Opposition to God's Commands; a Neglect of the most acceptable Offering

Offering which God requires : And this for the Sake of Dust and Earth, which in such Persons has no Service beyond this Life, and at the Hour of Death must be all left behind. And what then will it profit, if a Man had the Riches of the whole World at Command ; when Death is to separate him from them, and he is to lose his Soul eternally, for loving that, which now he has not, and never more can enjoy ?

Deliver me, therefore, O God, from this Evil, which thus blinds and damns : And since my blessed Redeemer has taught me, that the Perfection of the Gospel consists in *forsaking all* ; mercifully grant, I may be at all Times very fearful of those Inclinations, which put me upon keeping or gaining all. His Promise is made to the Poor in Spirit ; and thus, O God, may I ever seek his Blessing.

D R U N K E N N E S S .

I Come here before thee, O God, though altogether unworthy to appear in thy Presence ; but since my Unhappiness brings me a Petitioner to thee, to confess my Sins, and to beg thy Compassion and Help, I confide in thy infinite Mercy, that, having at all Times given Encouragement to returning Sinners, I likewise shall find Favour in thy Sight.

Behold, then, in the first Place, O God, I confess the Grievousness of my Sin ; it is a Sin which makes me neglect the Duties of my State, and much more the Duties of my Soul ; causing a Coldness, as to all the Exercises of Religion, and an Indifferency as to whatever belongs to thee, my God, and to the Means of working out my Salvation. It often destroys my Reason, that noble Faculty of my Soul, by which alone I am capable of knowing and seeking thee, my only Good. It weakens all the other Faculties of my Mind, and injures my Health, so that in this one Sin I seem to despise all thy Blessings, and make them useless, as to all those Purposes for which thou hast given them to me.

It engages me in idle Company, and here, O God, who can number the Sins into which I am drawn by

ill Example and the Weakness of my own yielding Temper? How many Passions are here raised, to the Prejudice of all that is good, both in myself and my Neighbour? Here I waste my Time; and my Hours, if not my Life, are here consumed, to the great Neglect of temporal and eternal Concerns. Here I spend many of those Talents, which thou hast bountifully deposited in my Hands; and though there are many Uses, in which by thy own Appointment, I might employ them to the Good of Soul and Body, and of my Family; yet of how many Talents, O God, is this the only Account I can give, that *I have wasted them in idle Company and Drink.*

Besides these, who can pretend to reckon up infinite other Sins, all known to thee, O God, occasioned by this; in the ill Example I give, in drawing others into Excess; in encouraging, or joining with those who prophane all that is sacred, ridicule Morality and Religion, and bring the Gospel into Contempt; who make Conscience a Phantom; and setting it loose from all Restraints, promote and glory in whatever is lewd and vicious; who consume their Estate, and make it their Pastime to bring their Generation into Misery. If I join only with these as Companions, 'I cannot be exempt from a great Share in their Guilt: But if I am equal with them in all their prophane and prodigal Extravagancies, O God, who then shall be able to sum up the Number and Horror of my Sins?'

Here I lay before thee the present State of my Conscience, as to this Particular. It is dismal enough in this imperfect Account which I give of it; and much worse must it appear to thee, O God, to whom all the particular Circumstances and Aggravations of my Crimes are known; such as, I hope, will move thee to have Compassion on me, since my Iniquity is become a Horror to me, and the earnest Desire of Amendment brings me here, this Day a Petitioner to thee. Look down therefore, I beseech thee, O God, upon my distressed Soul, and mercifully grant the Requests I make to thee.

O God, who seest me unhappily subject to every great Weakness, through a vicious Custom, which has

has strengthened in me Inclinations to what is offensive to thee, and pernicious to my own Soul ; mercifully grant me thy assisting Grace, that I may no longer be a Slave to Custom or Inclination ; but that now, undertaking to stand against them both, I may pursue my Design with such a steady Resolution, as to regain the Liberty I have lost, and subject all my unreasonable Desires to the Prescript of thy Law.

Hear this my Prayer, O God, for I am very sensible of the Difficulty of what I at present propose ; and although my Desire be ever so sincere, that I cannot accomplish it, but in Virtue of thy particular Assistance. For how shall I thus steadily deny myself, if thou, O Lord, dost not help me, and confirm me against the Violence of my own Inclinations ? Help me then, my gracious Lord, thou who knowest my Weakness and my Necessities, shew both thy Power and Goodness in my Relief ; since by these alone can be prevented my being eternally miserable.

Help me likewise, O merciful God, in breaking off from Company, in standing out against all Solicitations, and despising the Reproaches of Acquaintance. For whatever I propose of Amendment, I know can be to no Purpose, if I have not Resolution in these Particulars. In these therefore, O God, I beg thy Assistance ; I beg Resolution, I beg Courage, I beg Patience, I beg Discretion ; for all these are necessary for the Help of my Infirmitiy ; for the bearing all my inward Uneasiness in the Change of the whole Method of my Life, for contriving proper Means, for avoiding Occasions, and resisting Temptations. This must be done, if I am in earnest in what I have now proposed.

Grant therefore, O God, I may be truly in earnest ; that I may not only think of reforming, but likewise consider and resolve upon the Means that are necessary for executing what I propose. Ill Customs, I know, are to be overcome, but with great Difficulties ; and they who cannot bear the Uneasiness of their Cure, must still lie under their Distemper. But, O God, let not this be my Case. I own the Difficulty of my Cure ; but, behold, I offer myself to all whatever is necessary for it.

If there be Difficulties, they are only such have made necessary by my vicious Life. They are all justly due to my Sins; and there is nothing troublesome, but what I am bound to suffer. My great Sin has been in yielding to Inclination, and following my own Ways: And what can be more just, than to suffer now the Contradiction of my own Inclination and Will, that there my Punishment may be where my Sin has been?

But why do I speak of such Punishments, when I reflect upon my manifold and provoking Sins; when I consider my Crime to be Drunkenness, which, by thy Apostle, thou hast declared to be one of the Sins which exclude from Heaven, and that *Drunkards shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*? What Punishment can I think too great, if it may be the Means of delivering me from this unhappy State? O God, nothing can be too much for me to suffer; my Sin and my Unhappiness are such, that, were I to suffer the greatest Torments of this Life, the Condition would not be too hard. How then can I make Exceptions, when I have my Remedy proposed to me, upon the easy Terms of denying my Inclination, and resisting the Occasions of my Sin?

If Drunkards shall not inherit the Kingdom of God (and thou, O Lord, hast said it) as long as I go on still subject to this Vice, I am so long in the State of Damnation. And is not this the Misery to be dreaded above all others; to be miserable for ever and ever; and after Ten Thousand Millions and Ten Hundred Thousand Millions of Years, to have still Eternity to come, without any Comfort or Hopes of Relief? And to have the Offer made me of escaping all this, upon my breaking this ill Custom, and returning to a new Life! O God, how am I bound to acknowledge thy Goodness, who art thus merciful to Sinners? And how must I confess myself either an Atheist or Infidel, or desperately mad, if I do not accept of the Mercy, and readily chuse all the Uneasiness and Contradictions of a short Cure, rather than live on, doomed to an eternal Death, and only waiting for the Day of executing the Sentence, which then shall never be reversed?

O blessed

O blessed God, I accept the Mercy offered to one, whose Sins have rendered him unworthy of all Mercy ; but such is thy Godness, and I accept it. I am content with all the Difficulties I am to meet, and readily embrace whatever Self-denials or Retirement are necessary for this great Change of Life. But then, as I sincerely desire thee to direct, so I most earnestly beg thee to confirm my Resolutions, and to give me that true Spirit of an humble Penitent, as to embrace with Chearfulness and Courage, whatever Difficulties shall be necessary for the Cure of my Infirmity. And let it be the Effect of thy Grace in me, O God, to begin now at this Time, without admitting any Pretext for Delays : And may this Grace, O merciful Lord, be followed with the Gift of Perseverance, so as to go on untired and resolute, notwithstanding all the Struggles of a biased Nature, all the Temptations of Men and Devils, and all the Discouragements of whatever Inconveniences may appear from pursuing such a Resolution : May I still hold on, O God, and rather venture all, than flatter my Inclination by yielding to it : All, O God, rather than live on in this detestable Vice.

Neither let it be my Victory only to overcome Drunkenness, or the Sin of losing my Reason, and becoming Brute : Not this only, O God, but to break off from all Excesses of drinking, so as never to exceed in the *Quantity* of what I drink, nor in the *Time* or *Money* spent at such Entertainments. I know, O blessed Lord, I was created for a more noble End, than thus to spend my Time : I know likewise, where Reason is not injured by Excess, there may be still contracted a manifold Guilt, in drawing others to such Excess ; in idle Conversation ; in sinful Subjects of Discourse, in contracting a Habit of Idleness, and a Dislike of all that is serious and pious ; in the Neglect of Business, Disorder of Family, ill Example, Contempt of Discipline, Prejudice of Estate, Loss of Time, Grief of Friends, opening the Heart to many Passions, to a Love of unprofitable, dangerous and sinful Liberties ; taking it off from the Sense of what is eternal,

and giving it a Disrelish of whatever can be profitable to Salvation.

These, and infinite other Sins, I confess to thee, O God, are contracted at such Meetings, even where the Excess reaches not the Brain. Wherefore I here with all the Powers of my Soul, importune thy Power and Goodness to my Assistance, beseeching thee to help me in breaking from all such Company, and bidding Adieu to all such Entertainments. Imprint in my Soul a true Horror of them; as they deserve; may I ever apprehend them under all the Deformity which justly belongs to them; as the Corruption of Youth; the School of Prophaneness, Irreligion, and Atheism; the Encouragement of Vice; the Destruction of good Order and christian Discipline; the Consumption of Estates, Life, and Religion; and as that which opens the Way to all that is unbecoming, and even contrary to the Gospel.

With this Idea let my Soul be possessed so far as even to have a Dread of all such Meetings: And who ought not to dread them, if they consider how they confederate with Hell to the Overthrow of Religion, and Ruin of Souls? With this same may I be ever armed against all Temptations; and let thy Mercy, O God, so confirm this in me, that no Pretexts of Reformation, no Example, or Character of others, may prevail with me to be an Encourager of such idle Assemblies.

Rather, O merciful God, let thy Grace direct me to contrive some better Employment of my Time; for I confess, O God, I think they are much better employed who work at the Plough, the Spade, or the Anvil, than they who make little other Use of the Plenty thou hast given them than to drink, smoke, game, and sleep away their Lives; the former are esteemed more unhappy, but these are certainly so: And therefore, with all my Soul, I beg of thy infinite Goodness, to deliver, or preserve me from the Unhappiness of such an idle, disedifying and sinful Life.

This I ask of thee, O God, who knowest all my Weakness; but thou seest the Sincerity of my Heart, and, according to this, I beseech thee to grant my Petition.

Petition. Regard not, therefore, O Lord, my Inclinations, nor the Corruption of my Nature ; for these I see to be contrary to thy Law, and my own eternal Good ; and it is the Fear I have of these brings me now a Petitioner before thy Throne, to implore thy Help against them.

Assist me therefore, O God, and grant me now the Strength I ask. Give me Strength to stand against my own evil Inclinations, against Company and all other Temptations ; give me Courage and Patience to bear all the Uneasiness of my Cure. And, as for the Reproaches and evil Constructions of Men, may I resolutely despise all these, and not value what Men can say, so I can but come to such a Change, as to overcome all my evil Habits of Idleness and Excess, and experience the Comforts of a truly christian Life. Grant but this, O God, and I am content with all the Difficulties that are in the Way to this Happiness, and that the World expresses its Dislike of me as it shall think fit. For what is all this, if I am in thy Favour, and in the Way to eternal Comforts ?

A Clean Heart.

KNowing how great is the Promise thou hast made to the *Clean of Heart*, that *they shall see thy Face*; I here come before thee, this Day, O God, to beg that there may be found nothing in me, to exclude me from this Promise. The Knowledge of my own Corruption makes me fear myself, and even apprehend my future State ; assist me therefore, I beseech thee, with a particular Grace, at this Time, that I may pour forth my Soul before thee, with such true Fervour of Spirit, that my Prayer may ascend before, and obtain the Grant of what I want.

In the first Place, I recommend to thee, O God of Holines, my Heart and my Thoughts, beseeching thee to take them into thy Protection, and to fence them against all Evil. Be thou, O Lord, a Guard unto them, that my Heart being created and chosen by thee, to be the Temple of the Holy Ghost, nothing may have Admittance there, that can possibly defile it;

but that it may be ever holy, because thou art holy.

For this End, I most earnestly beg thy Grace may have this good Effect in me, to make me ever watchful against all evil Thoughts, so that upon their very first Approach I may always start at them, as upon the Surprize of an Enemy, and industriously labour to remove them. This I ask, because my Thoughts, though concealed to others, are all open and known to thee who art the Searcher of Hearts; and, if I wilfully entertain any that are sinful, however innocent I appear, yet my Guilt is presently before thee, and to thee I must give an Account of the Sin, whatever it be, to which I have thus opened my Heart.

Wherefore I beseech thee, O God, to give me a Horror of all such Thoughts, and such a faithful Watchfulness against them, that without any Delay of Treaty or Conference, or even so much as looking at them, I may use my best Endeavour for disengaging myself from them. This, O God, I confess must be thy Gift, and I ask it of thee, that, having renounced the Devil, I may never entertain it under this Disguise.

Preserve me likewise, O God, from taking Delight and pleasing myself in any of these sinful Imaginations which present themselves to my Mind; since it must necessarily defile my Soul; if I wilfully seek Satisfaction, and please myself in what is so displeasing to thee. Arm me therefore, I beseech thee, with a Zeal against all my Enemies, and give me Grace to resist them; that whenever they assault me, and unthinkingly Surprize me with Delight, I may, in that very Moment, give them a Repulse, and with an Abhorrence renounce whatever undue Impressions they have made upon my Soul.

Help me, I beseech thee, O merciful God, in this Point; for, if thy Grace prevents it not, my corrupt Nature will betray me to my Enemies, and I shall be insensibly drawn in to join with them in all their Designs. But suffer me not, O Father of Mercies, to be thus treacherous to myself, in a Case, where no less than Eternity is concerned. Stand by me, O God, in all such Dangers, and come in to my Assistance. Thou knowest

knowest my Weakness, my Blindness, and the Falseness of my Nature ; thou seest all my Dangers ; and if thy Goodness does not move thee to have Compassion, what can I do but perish ? Forsake me not, therefore, in such my Distress, but help me according to my Necessities, and then, by thy Power and Mercy, shew me that thou art my God.

Enter then, O Lord, into my Soul, and keep Possession of that, which, upon so many Titles, belongs to thee. Permit it not to be seized and held by the Enemy, but command him thence by thy Word of Power, and obtain for me the Liberty of enjoying thee in Peace. Turn then all my Thoughts with Violence towards thee; turn them from all other Objects; and let this, O God, be my constant Practice, as often as any Evil assaults me, immediately to raise my Heart to thee, and seek Refuge where is my only Defence, that so I may disappoint my Enemy, and make all his Snares serviceable, for obtaining greater Security and Strength to my Soul. May this, O God, be always my Practice, and let me never be disappointed in my Hope.

But since the working of my Thoughts is so very uncertain, that I scarce know how to make a true Judgement of them, and I fear am often deceived; I therefore beg of thee, if it be thy blessed Will, to deliver me from this troublesome and dangerous Exercise. It is an afflicting Thing for Souls, stamped with thy Image, O God, and created for the Possession of thee, to be drawn into these muddy Delights, and, when they are seeking thee, even then to find themselves overwhelmed with Filth. Ah, my God ! I know this to be the Effect and Punishment of Sin, and therefore Justice obliges me to submit to the Trouble of it. But still, O Father of Mercies, here thou mayest have Compassion on me, and either release, or change something of this Penalty.

Shew Mercy therefore, I beseech thee, to thy Servant, and rescue me from this Persecution. I refuse not to suffer, neither do I desire any Exemption from the Scourge, for, I know, I deserve the worst. But, O God, I most humbly petition for Favour in this Particular;

cular, where the Punishment puts me in Danger of increasing my Sin: I beg thee here to shew thyself an indulgent Father to me; and suffer me no more to feel the Effects of this Corruption which is so detestable in thy Sight.

Frequent Storms have often risen against me, and brought my Soul into great Confusion; and, how far I have yielded under them, is only known to thee; but now prostrate before thy infinite Goodness, I humbly beg Pardon for whatever Guilt I have at any Time contracted, either by opening my Heart to any sinful Delight, or giving Entertainment to unlawful Thoughts, or not making that speedy Resistance against Temptations as I ought. Whatever my Sins have been in this Kind, through the whole Course of my Life, I now lay them before thee, and beseech thee to cancel them, through the Blood of thy only Son, that so, being purified from this Guilt, my Heart may be presented a clean Sacrifice in thy Sight.

And now, for the Time to come, let thy Mercy be so favourable to me, as to grant me a Calm; let nothing, that can defile, break in and disturb the Quiet of my Soul: May thy Goodness privilege me against such Assaults, and restrain the Malice of my Enemy within such Bounds that he may have no Liberty for making these Attacks upon me. This I sincerely desire, that I may no more relapse into the same Sins; and I hope the Sincerity of my Prayers, for obtaining a clean Heart, will prevail for the Grant of what I ask.

At least, so far I importune thy Mercy to grant my Request, that I never draw Temptations upon myself, by my own Fault, either through Indiscretion, or yielding to any Inclination that is sensual. Upon this Account, I ask of thee, O God, such inward Strength of Mind, that I may keep all my Senses under due Government, and never allow them such Liberties as may be the Occasion of Sin. O my God, how often have I drunk in Poison, and let in Death by these Windows, pleasing myself with such Entertainments as could not be separated from Sin! Great and many have been my Sins in this Kind, whilst my Eyes and Ears have been there open

open where, had Salvation been my Care, I ought to have turned them away, and shut them with Horror.

But great is thy Mercy, O God, and to this I appeal, for the Pardon of these numberless Follies and Sins. Forgive me, I beseech thee, O Father of Mercy; have Regard to the Sighs of an humble and contrite Heart, and, through the infinite Merits of my blessed Redeemer, cleanse my Soul from the Guilt of my Iniquities.

But in vain do I make this Petition; if I take no Care to reform my past Disorders, and do not labour to keep my Senses under a Christian Restraint. Wherefore I here solicit Thee, O God, for thy heavenly Assistance, that neither my Eyes nor my Ears may be any more in the Service of Sensuality; but that, whenever this begins to appear, I may forthwith take the Alarm, as against an Enemy, and forbid all the Faculties of my Soul and Body to contribute, in any Kind, to its Assistance.

In this, O God, give me Strength; I beseech Thee; and whatever my Inclination demands yet mercifully grant, I may with Resolution stand against it, and in those very dangerous Circumstances, remember, I was not created to serve Inclination, but to worship, obey, and serve Thee, my God. Grant then, I may resist Inclination and Nature, which are corrupt, and lead to Sin; that I may keep all my Senses under such Command, as to restrain them from Evil: That using them in the Service of Life, as Thou hast ordained, I may not abuse them to thy Displeasure, whose Gift they are, and on whose continual Mercy every Motion and Action of them depends. Turn away my Eyes, O God, that they see not Vanity; stop my Ears against it: How many are miserable through the Want of these Senses! It is thy Mercy, I enjoy them; grant I may never turn it to Sin.

This Petition I renew, O God, in a particular Manner, as to the due Government of my Tongue: Imploring thy Grace, that I may never open my Lips in Favour of any Thing that is sensual, either directly or indirectly, neither in Earnest nor in Jest. For I know this Sort of Communication is unbecoming a Christian, it is forbidden by thy Apostle, and strict Charge is given by him to the Followers of Jesus Christ, that no

corrupt Communication proceed out of their Mouths; that Filthiness, or foolish Talking, or Jesting, be not once named amongst them. Wherefore, I beseech thee, hear thy Servant, O God, and so mercifully assist me with thy Grace, that I may strictly observe this Rule, and never more speak one Word, in Compliance with any sinful Inclination of my own, or by the Encouragement of others.

This I ask with greater Earnestness, because I am sensible this is not only my Sin, as in many other Things; but, by such Discourse, I become the Minister of the Devil, and, as his Agent, help to draw Souls into his Snares; even those Souls which were purchased by the Blood of Christ, those do I endeavour to bring back into Slavery again; and, how great may be the Injury I do them, is only known to thee, O God. But let this be so no more, I beseech thee. Let the Horror of the Sin, the Fear of thy great Displeasure, the Injury of my Neighbour, be a Bar upon my Lips, and for ever keep them shut against all such Filth; and, while I profess myself a Follower of Jesus Christ, let me no more be thus a Traitor to him; not so much as in a jesting Way, since, however I may mean no Harm, the Devil is certainly in earnest, and, in this Matter, is no more capable of Jest, than it can be to give Poison without intending to do Mischief by it. Rather I know, where this Subject is dressed up with Wit, it is still the more mortal, and like a pointed Dart, makes the deeper Wound. Grant therefore, O God, this my Petition, that I may never join in such Discourse, never speak one Word that can bear this Construction, but that I may resist all Corruption, and be as cautious in what I speak, as one who believes he is to give an Account of every idle Word.

For the more exact Observance of this, I beg likewise, I may be ever careful in the Choice of my Company, so as to avoid all those whom I know inclined to take such Liberties as are not becoming Christian Conversation. This, I confess, is a great Point, and so many Sins take their Rise from these Indiscretions, that I cannot pretend to be innocent if I wilfully put myself into such Company, or do not, with Resolution
break

break from it. Be my Helper therefore here, I beseech thee, O God; and, since thou hast given me a Desire not to offend thee, grant likewise such Strength of Grace, as to stand against all those Inclinations and Affections which would lead me into the Occasions of offending thee. Vain, I confess, are all my Desires of doing well, if I follow the Inclinations which lead me to Evil. Vain is the Innocence of [my Proposals, in intending no Harm, if I wilfully put myself into the Dangers of Sin. Let thy Grace therefore make me wiser, and establish my Heart against all such Snares; and since I desire and profess to love thee, take from my Heart, I beseech thee, the Love of whatever is contrary to thee: Since I profess Sin to be my greatest Misfortune, grant I may never wilfully run into it, and suffer me not, O merciful God, to be so mad as to choose such Pastime, and make that my present Satisfaction which cannot be separate from Sin: For, what is this but pleasing myself in drawing the greatest of Mischiefs upon my own Head, and making myself eternally miserable?

Having made this Petition, I now ask, likewise, to be preserved from all sinful Actions, and the greater Crimes of this Kind. This I have still more Reason to ask, because they are the greater Provocation to thee, and there can be no Hopes of thy Mercy, as long as a Person lives under this Guilt. Thy Apostle has sufficiently informed me of this, in declaring these to be the *Sins of the Heathens*, who have been given up by God to a reprobate Sense, and *not God*? That the *Lufts of the Flesh war against the Soul*; that they are the *Works of Darkness*: that *to be carnally minded is Death*, and *Enmity with God*; that they, *who fulfil the Lufts of the Flesh, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*; that the *unclean Person has not any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ*.

This is several Times repeated by thy Apostle, and while he delivers thy Word to me, it is thou, O Lord, hast pronounced this Sentence; and, if I live in these Sins, I see I am by thee already condemned. Help me therefore, here, O God, and deliver me from this Guilt: Help me in overcoming whatever Part of this
Evil

Evil I am subject to: I am weak, and I confess it to thee, but through thy Grace, I shall be able to do all Things. Leave me not therefore, I beseech thee, to my Weakness, but hear and help thy poor Servant; for behold I put my Trust in thee.

The Difficulty is great in gaining this Victory over myself; but what wilt thou do, my Soul?

Is it not much harder to dwell with eternal Flames?

Thou hearest what God has said; that they who do these Things, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Thou must therefore, either overcome thyself, or look for the Execution of this Sentence already pronounced.

Ah, my God, thus I know the Case stands with me; I am at present unhappy in my Sin, and, without Amendment, must wait for greater Unhappiness.

Thou hast said it, whose Word cannot fail; if I reform not my Life, I must be eternally miserable.

Behold then, O God, I turn to thee, my only Helper, and ask for Mercy.

I confess all my past Iniquities before thee; my Soul is in Confusion at the Horror of my Crimes.

My Sins have been multiplied above the Hairs of my Head; and now, like a heavy Weight, they are a Burthen under which my Soul must sink, if thou, O Lord, dost not relieve me.

Have Compassion therefore on me, I beseech thee; stretch forth thy Hand to me, in my Distress, and help me.

For though I have been so unworthy, ungrateful, and blind, as to rebel against thee, and live on unconcerned in thy Displeasure, yet now my Sins are a Rack to my Soul; I look upon myself as the most miserable of all Creatures, for the many and grievous Sins I have committed; and, oh, that now with a Flood of Tears, Tears of Repentance, Tears of Sorrow and Contrition, I could cleanse my Soul from all the Pollutions of them.

This, O God, I desire from my Heart; have Regard to my Desires, and grant my Request.

Grant me now a sincere Repentance, and may the Fruit of it appear in the Amendment of my Life.

May

May it appear in my most serious Endeavours for Amendment.

Let thy heavenly Light and Grace direct me, in considering the Means necessary for overcoming my Sin.

May the same same Grace give me Resolution and Strength to make Use of all such Means, however difficult they may be.

Let it not now be thinking only, but doing: And, in the first Place, may I now effectually break from all the *Occasions* of my Sin.

And if such *Occurrences* seem as dear or necessary to me, as my Hand or my Eye, let this be no Exception; may I choose to be maim or lame; all Inconveniences, O Lord, rather than live on in such a State, as to expect nothing but to be cast into Hell.

If Nature will not be governed, may I undertake such Ways as will oblige it to yield; for it is far better for me, O Lord, to bear the Difficulties of bringing it into Subjection, than, by its Disorders, to become a Reprobate.

I cannot pretend either to desire Salvation, or to love thee, my God, if seeing myself carried out of the Way, I will undertake and suffer nothing for putting a Stop to this Violence.

If Nature will not bear it willingly, it must be brought to it unwillingly, and forced to bend: All Difficulties are to be suffered here, rather than lose thee, my God.

How many Things have I suffered through my Sin, through my Passion, Pride, or Humour? And shall not I suffer more for my Salvation?

All for thee, my God; I now offer myself to suffer all whatever shall be necessary for my Cure.

If Fasting, if Sackcloth and Ashes, if lying on the Ground, if renouncing Ease, and all that pleases, be necessary for humbling the Flesh, I accept it all; thinking it much better the Flesh should be punished now, than my Soul perish for ever.

If Recollection be necessary for considering the true State of my Soul; if a Retreat be necessary for separating myself from all the Provocations to Sin; behold I choose this as infinitely better than to be separated from thee for ever.

I approve,

I approve, I submit to, I choose all Difficulties that can contribute to the healing my distempered Soul: And now, through thy Grace, I begin without farther Delay.

Grant me thy Grace, O God, and Constancy of Mind that is necessary for me. I remember the Devil left not the young Man in the Gospel, though at the Command of Christ, but with great Struggling, so as almost to deprive him of Life.

If the evil Spirit be thus obstinate in me, and unwilling to quit his Hold, I cannot wonder, it is my own Fault, who have thus given him the Encouragement, and I must be contented with the Trouble I have thus created to myself.

But help me then, O God, according to my Necessities; help me in recovering my Liberty.

And now, O merciful Lord, whenever the evil Spirit, by his Suggestions, shall make his Attempts upon me; stand by me, and give me Resolution to do what shall be most effectual for my Safety.

Give me Resolution to resist them, to break away from my own Thoughts, from my Place; from my Bed, and, without any Consideration, to throw myself prostrate before thee, and upon the Earth, in the most humble Manner, to importune thee for Help against my Enemy.

Thus, O God, may I always do, upon the very first Approach of Evil, without allowing any Time of Amusement, or Debates; and thus with Violence may I stand against Violence.

Almighty and everlasting God, Father of Mercy, who callest Sinners to Repentance, and hast promised they shall find thee to be their God, who are truly converted to thee. Grant, I beseech thee, that what I now propose may be the Effect of a sincere Repentance; give me Strength to go through all the Difficulties of it, and deliver me from all Delusion of my own Passion. By this Method I may wholly overcome my own ill Habits, be purified from whatever has hitherto defiled my Soul, and by thy Mercy obtain the comfortable Treasure of a clean Heart, the Way to thy eternal Blessing. Grant this, O God, that thou mayest be glorified in a

poor

poor Sinner returning from his evil Ways, and giving
Praise to thy holy Name for ever

For overcoming any sinful Custom or Vice.

BEHOLD here, O merciful Lord, an unhappy Sinner before thee; one, who, instead of faithfully serving thee, is a Slave to Sin. Upon this Account, I know myself to be miserable, and under thy great Displeasure. However, since now my Sin is become my Trouble, I sincerely desire to forsake it (and to thee, O God, is my Sincerity known) I hope I shall find a favourable Acceptance of my Prayers, and, that calling all Sinners to Repentance, thou wilt now receive one, who obeys thy Call, and comes to thee.

And, in the first Place, that I may not deceive myself, as I too often have done, I most humbly beseech thee, to touch my Heart, and, by thy effectual Grace, to give me a true, hearty, and sincere Repentance of all my past Sins, and, in particular, of that, which at present is my greatest Burthen. Grant, that what I now ask may not proceed from any superficial, passing, inconstant, melancholy, or otherwise ill grounded Concern; but from the real Desire of my Heart, so that what I now do may be proposed and undertaken by thy Direction, and finished by thy helping Grace.

Beginning upon so good a Foundation, I, in the next Place, ask of thee, to enlighten and direct me, what I am to do, in order to the gaining this Victory upon myself. In this, O God, I stand in Need of thy particular Assistance, because, without this, I shall certainly fail in the Choice of proper Means, or deceive myself with some plausible, but treacherous Pretext, such as will make void whatever Good I at present propose.

Take me therefore, I most earnestly beseech thee, O God, under thy Protection, and direct my Steps into thy Paths. Deliver me from all Delusions in this important Concern, and give me that practical Discretion as not to be imposed on by the deceitful Arguments of the World, of my own false Nature, my Passion or my Sloth. These are all so agreeable to Inclination, that I have too great Reason to fear myself. And therefore knowing I have nothing to trust to, but thy Goodness and

and Mercy; to these I appeal, and with such an entire Resignation, I put myself into thy Hands, that I hope, as thou hast promised, thou wilt not forsake those who seek and put their Trust in thee.

Direct me then, O God, in thy Mercy, and grant I may now consider what are the necessary Means for effecting what I propose; and this, O blessed Lord, with the Seriousness of one, who desires to have his Work done. Let me not therefore now content myself with barren Thoughts; but, as one who is to build a Tower, let me consider what is necessary for finishing it: Without this, I know, all the rest is but Mockery; and I can no more reform my Life, than I can build a Tower, by sitting still and thinking of it, except I procure Necessaries, and set forward the Work: And this it is; I now ask of thee, O God: Help me, I beseech thee, in considering it.

Reflect then, my Soul; see what thy Distemper is: How long Time hast thou been accustomed to it?

Dost not thou unthinkingly fall into this Sin? Art not thou carried to it with Violence?

Are not thy Inclinations strong? Hast not thou been often sensible of thy Evil: Often judged it necessary to be reformed: Often proposed and undertaken it.

And yet still thy Sin continues: Dost not thou see in this thy Work is difficult; and what thou hast hitherto proposed, or done, is not enough?

Is it not evident, if thou in earnest desirest to have it finished, something more is to be done, and other Means are to be used for effecting it.

And if thou goest on, as hitherto, what can thy Expectation be, but vain?

What then is to be done? Are there any Occasions to be avoided? Art thou too separate from Provocations, Temptations, or Company?

Are thy Inclinations, Appetite or Flesh, to be subdued? Are Customs to be broken? Are thy Senses to be governed? Art thou to depart from thy common Way? Are thy Passions to be brought under Command, and thy Tongue to be restrained? Art thou to overcome Nature, and deny thyself in what is most pleasing to thee, and do that, to which thy Nature is averse?

All

All this is done by great Numbers, who have brought Nature into Subjection. Nay, thou thyself canst do it: When Pride, or Interest, when Flattery or Dependance, require it of thee, thou canst do it all.

Let but some Humour or Contradiction undertake to command, and thou art, at the Instant, a perfect Master of thyself, and there is no Self-denial, but is made easy to thee.

Ah, my God, daily Experience obliges me to confess this: I find plainly, for human Respects, I can govern all whatever I pretend to be ungovernable in me: This is Demonstration the Thing is to be done. And why is it then, I do it not for thy Sake, O God?

The only Reason is this; because my Inclinations to Evil are stronger than the Love or Fear I pretend to have for thee; and because I am more concerned in what is present, than in what Faith teaches me of the Life to come. Thus the Strength of my Inclinations or Passions is the Cause of all my Misfortune; and it is to favour these, I lose my God, and live out of the Way of Salvation.

Ah, my Soul! and wilt thou choose thus to perish eternally? What is all this World; what is Happiness, its Satisfaction and Greatness, in Comparison of Eternity? A short Life finishes all these; the Stroke of Death cuts all these off, and Eternity then begins: And is Suffering so easy to thee, that, upon such inconsiderable Conditions, thou choosest to enter into everlasting Sufferings, such as are without all Hopes of Relief or Comfort! All, that have been in thy unhappy Way, for so many Ages past, are all gone, as a Shadow; thou hast now a short Appearance to make, thou wilt soon follow them, and then all this World, with all thou enjoyest in it, will be, as if it never had been, and nothing but everlasting Misery before thee, to reward thy Folly: And this, because thou wilt not take the Pains to govern thy Inclinations.

O blessed God, I see the Folly of such a Choice, and through thy Grace, I resolve to renounce it. I see my Life must be reformed, my Inclinations, Passions, ill Customs, must be brought all under the Government of thy Law, and whatever the Trouble or Contradiction

diction be, in effecting it, I must undertake and go through it.

I know it is what may be done, and that great Numbers have done it. I know, by due Watchfulness, I may observe all my habitual and surprising Sins, and be prepared to stand against them. I know the strongest Inclinations and Passions may be overcome, by Self-denials, Separations, Humiliation, &c. I know the Violence of long Customs may be broken by the same Method; I know, the whole Man may be thus brought into Subjection. And whereas nothing of this can be duly effected, but by thy Help; thou thyself hast taught me, how this is to be obtained. Thou hast taught me, both by thy Word, and infinite Instances of thy Mercy, that Prayer, and Fasting, and Alms, and Works of Charity, with the Sighs of a contrite Heart, are powerful Expedients for obtaining thy Assistance: And I question not, if I make Use of these Means, with a sound Faith and firm Hope in thy Goodness, but I shall receive such Succours of thy Grace, as to find the good Effect of my Endeavours.

Now, I am very sensible, this requires a Change in the whole Method of my Life, that I must renounce my usual Sloth, and Indulgence of myself, and that my Care now must be, not how to please, but how to deny myself. This must be; but what then? It is worth all my Labour and Trouble, since it is for the escaping of Hell, and securing a happy Eternity. If I were now in Hell, as my Sins deserve, how willingly should I accept of this Trouble, and ten thousand Times more, were my Release to be granted, from that Place of Torments, on this Condition? And can I pretend to have common Reason, if believing myself to be now in the direct Way to Hell, nay, even posting on to it, I will not take such Pains for delivering myself from this unhappy State? For what is this Trouble? It is no more, than what, by my Sins, I have made necessary; and therefore both for Justice, and for my own Interest, I am bound to undertake it. And, O God, how little, how very inconsiderable is it, in Comparison of the endless Misery I am to escape, and the eternal Crown I am to gain by it.

This

This being the Truth of my Case, I beseech thee, O merciful God, to give me Resolution to undertake this Method, Courage to go on with it, and Perseverance to see the happy Fruits of it. Let no Kind of Self-love prevail in me, but only that which is solicitous to secure my Eternity; and if that, which is corrupt, appears, demanding its usual Homage; give me Grace to despise it, and by a steady Resistance, to let it know, I have chosen another Master. If it murmurs, if it rebels, if it contrives all Ways, both by Snares and Force; stand thou by me, O God, and, by thy Grace help me to put it into Despair, by convincing it, that I am ready to suffer all the Uneasiness, whatever it be, that is necessary for subduing it.

This, O eternal God, is my hearty Desire; confirm it in me, I most earnestly beseech thee, and improve it. Root out of my Heart the Love of all that is sinful; inspire me with a Contempt of all that is dangerous, vain and worldly, and let not Passion, Humour, or any ill Customs, govern in me, but thy holy Will alone. If there be Difficulties in this Method of a new Life, let it be my daily Satisfaction to find them, and my Glory to suffer the Uneasiness of them. For having taken so much Pains for Earth, and suffered so much Uneasiness in the Cause of Self-love and Sin; it is but reasonable I should suffer something in a better Cause.

This I confess, this I desire; reject not the Petition of a poor Sinner, but help me, O most gracious Lord, according as thou knowest I stand in Need of thy Help. I know the Task to be great, which I now propose, and my Weakness is so well known, that it is enough to discourage me. But, O God, since my Confidence is not in myself, but in thee, I have, in thy infinite Power and Goodness, enough to trust to, and to carry me on with Comfort, amidst all Discouragements. Here then is my Dependance, here my Hope: Trusting in these, I resolve to make War against Sin, to break from myself, from all evil Customs and Company: Help me, O God of Mercy, in my Undertaking, and by thy continual Assistance carry me on, with such Constancy,

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Constancy, that neither my corrupt Nature, nor the Devil, nor World, may any more prevail against me : Grant this, O God, that my Soul may be saved, and thy holy Name be for ever glorified in the Works of thy Mercy.

Under some immoderate Affection or Passion.

ICome before thee, O God, to complain of my Unhappiness, and to implore thy Mercy for my Relief. Behold, O merciful Father, my Soul is in great Disorder, and a violent Storm is risen within me. My Heart is seized, and I seem rather to have lost the Liberty both of Thoughts and Will ; Peace is departed from my Breast, and strange Imaginations rack my Spirits ; so that I am not only robbed of my inward Comfort, but am likewise rendered incapable of seeking thee in Prayer, or performing any one Duty which belongs to Eternity.

This, O God, is but a sad Account of a Soul, which being created for thee, and not for this World, ought to be solicitous in working out its Salvation ; and unhappy I, instead of Heaven, have my Heart wholly taken up with Earth, am bent upon it, as my only Concern, and have all my Thoughts engaged, if not in Sin, at least in what is on the very Brink of Sin, and puts me every Moment in danger of offending.

Have Compassion on me, O God, in these ill Circumstances, and mercifully deliver me from them. I lay my Happiness before thee ; I own it as it is ; and I sincerely desire thy Help, for being rescued from it. O blessed Lord, if it be thy blessed Will, deliver me from this Unhappiness ; moderate my Affections ; cut off all hurtful Excess ; quiet my Thoughts ; compose my Mind, and restore my Soul again to Liberty.

Help me, O Lord, in this, and let a Calm return, that I perish not in this Storm. I am unhappy at present, and in great Danger ; but all Things are in thy Power, and though I cannot command myself, yet, behold, O God, all that is within me is subject to thee. Command then, O God of Power, command and make

make all my Passions obey; dispossess my Heart of all Evil; let nothing rule there, but only thou alone; be thou there the only Lord and Sovereign, and thus let Peace be restored to my Soul.

In the mean Time, till this happy Hour appears, strengthen me so far, at least, by thy Grace, that I may resist all the sinful Part, and upon no Motives whatever be drawn into Evil. My Weakness is very great, and my Passion violent; what then must my Misery be, if thou, O Lord, dost not in thy Mercy support me? Assist me therefore with heavenly Strength, that amidst all Dangers, I may be faithful to thee, and never comply with Passion in Contradiction to thy Law.

Be thou likewise a Guide to me, and direct me by the Light of thy Grace, that I may do nothing that is rash or indiscreet. This thy Help, O God, is necessary for me, because I am very sensible, how much Reason and Judgement are corrupted by Passion; and that these will easily find Arguments to justify what is wholly unreasonable. Wherefore, apprehensive of this Deceit, I beseech thee, O Lord, to take me into thy Protection, and secure me against all Snares; for my Danger is great, and I have no Security but in thee.

O God, thou hast Delight in shewing Mercy to such as call upon thee in Distress; despise not now my Petition, and though my Unworthiness be great, yet let my Unhappiness move thee to Compassion. Have Regard to my disordered Soul, and leave me not now to myself, when, my Reason being blinded by Passion, I am like an Enemy contriving my own Ruin. Ah, my God, take Pity on me, and either deliver me from this Evil, or powerfully preserve me that it become not a Snare to me. And this one Thing, above all others, I ask of thee, that, being sensible of my Misfortune, I may be so wise as not wilfully to concur to the Encrease or Continuance of it. Give me this Government, O Lord, that I may not be unhappy through my own Folly. Give me Patience and Courage, under all the Self-denials that are necessary for me; and, since I seek Help from thee, help me, I beseech

beseech thee, in such a Manner, as thou knowest best for me.

On some particular Occasions.

For the Choice of a State of Life.

O Eternal God, who art the Light of the World, and for whose Glory the whole Creation is ordained, to thee I submit myself at present, and my whole Life; and, that I may live to thy Glory, I beseech thee, in thy Mercy, to direct me in the Choice I am to make, that so, having thee for my Guide, I may be led into such a Way, as may be pleasing to thee, and proper for working out my Salvation.

I confess I am under a total Darkness, as to what is to come; and that, as to my own Inclinations, they are so corrupt and blind, that, if I take them for my Counsel, I shall be in evident Danger of being misled. Give me not therefore up, I beseech thee, to the Conduct of my own Weakness, or Passions, but take me, O God, into thy Care, and, by thy Grace, preserve me from all Delusion, direct me into such a Way as may render me most acceptable in thy Sight, and most effectually contribute to my eternal Good.

Have Compassion therefore on me, and deliver me from the dangerous Rashness of youthful Years; this I have Reason to fear, because of the infinite Numbers ruined by this Way: And, who am I that I can pretend to be secure, if thou, O Lord, dost not shew Mercy, and help me? Stand by me, therefore, and prevent these mischievous Effects of my own Blindness. Let thy holy Grace make me, at all Times, fearful of myself, and of the dangerous Indiscretions to which I am exposed: And since thou hast taught me, that to take Advice, to bear my Parents' Instruction, is the surest Way for escaping these Dangers, grant, O God, I may ever follow this Direction, and never do any Thing of Concern but with the best Advice.

But then here, O most gracious Lord, I ask thy Grace to make me wise, in consulting and giving Ear to such as are best capable of advising, and from whose Mouth

Mouth I may hear thy blessed Will. Wherefore I most earnestly beseech thee, to deliver me from the deceitful Person, from the Flatterer and the Unwise; let no Affection bias my Judgement, nor Fondness incline me to hear those who either know not what they say, or propose more their own Interest than my Good. In this Point, O God, suffer me not to be deceived.

I ask likewise, O merciful Lord, thou wouldest prevent in me the Mischiefs of those Impressions which the World makes in the Souls of the Unwary, that I may not be deluded by its Honours, Greatness, or Riches. Let me not be bent upon any of these, with too much Eagerness, nor seek them as the Grounds of Happiness: Rather, O God, may I be directed by thee, to be solicitous for my spiritual and eternal Good, and, before all other Things, give this so far the Place, as to think nothing fit for a christian Choice, where there is likely to be any Hazard of this. For, what can all other Things of this World profit me, if I lose my Soul? And may not this be justly feared, where there is Provision for every Thing else, and this alone put to the Venture of evident and apparent Danger?

As thou therefore, O my God, art the first of all Beings, and infinitely above all others, so grant that I may consider thee, in the first Place, and never permit any Kind of worldly Advantage to have the Preference in my Choice. For this End suffer me not, I most humbly beseech thee, to choose any State which either is in itself unlawful, or, according to common Practice, cannot easily be separated from Justice and Sin. For, if this be not prevented, how unhappy must my Circumstances be, in depending for a Livelihood upon what is unlawful, and being every Day under the Temptation of doing what is unjust for Bread? Be so merciful therefore to me, O God, as not to permit this to be my unhappy Lot.

Have Compassion on me, O Father of Mercies, in this great Affair, on the Choice of which depends not only the Good of my whole Life, but likewise my Eternity. Be thou my Director in it, and let no Kind of Weakness prevail in me. Let me do nothing rashly, nothing inconsiderately: Let neither any sudden, mistaken

mistaken Zeal, nor any worldly Passion deceive me; but let thy heavenly Light be my Guide. To thee alone are known all my Weaknesses, and by thee alone are foreseen all the Difficulties of every State; choose therefore, O Light eternal, as thou knowest to be best for me. I resign this whole Matter into thy Hands. I surrender myself entirely to thee, and I beg thee so to confirm me in what I now do, that I may never revoke it, or act contrary to what I profess.

To be thus privileged against all Indiscretion, Passion, and ill Advice, is a Favour far above what I deserve; but, I beseech thee, O Lord, not to regard my Unworthiness, nor deal with me according to my Sins, but, according to the Multitude of thy own tender Mercies, be favourable to me. I here, in the Sincerity of a hearty Repentance, beg Pardon for whatever Sins I have committed against thee; and it is now my hearty Desire never more to provoke thy Anger against me. Hear me, O God, in this Point, and by thy Grace, protect me from all Evil, that by new Sins I may not provoke thee to deny thee Protection I ask, and leave me to the Unhappiness of my own ill Choice.

Thus, O blessed Lord, trusting in thy Goodness to one that is undeserving, I recommend this my Concern into thy Care, and by these Means hope to obtain thy Blessing.

Upon undertaking any Busines.

GO D of infinite Majesty, and sovereign Lord of All, I come here in thy Presence to acknowledge thy universal Power, to which all Things are subject, and my universal Weakness, who, of myself, am able to do nothing. I confess, in this very Thing which I have undertaken, I can expect no Success of Satisfaction, but as far as thou shalt please to enable me, and give a Blessing to my Endeavours.

Wherefore behold, O God, I now prostrate myself before thee, most humbly beseeching thee to have Regard to my Weakness, and so to assist me as may be necessary for duly accomplishing what I have undertaken. Give me Light and Understanding that

that I may truly apprehend what belongs to my Charge, and be delivered from all the Mischiefs of my own Oversight, Neglect, or Indiscretion. Give me Strength of Mind to bear all Difficulties, and that I never offend thee through Impatience, whatever Discouragements happen.

Let not my Unworthiness turn away thy Favours from me, but mercifully forgive me all my Sins. And, that I may have the stronger Hope in thy Assistance, grant, O God, I may forsake my Sins, amend all my evil Ways, and, with a watchful Solicitude, labour every Day to be faithful in thy Service. For though I know thou art found by those that seek thee, and art a continual Blessing to such as, like obedient Children, walk in the Ways of thy Commandments; yet I know too, thou forsakes those that forsake thee, and that the Wicked can have no true Confidence in thy Protection.

Thus, O merciful Father, thou hast made it not only my eternal, but also temporal Interest, to be faithful, in serving thee. Grant, I may thus seek thy Protection and daily Help, that I may depend on no other Way of thriving, but by being always careful in thy Service.

And since thou requirest it of us, to perform, with Fidelity and Diligence, whatever we undertake, deliver me, I beseech thee, from all Carelessness, Sloth, and Neglect: Give me Grace to overcome all such Inclinations, and that I may not suffer a corrupt Nature to govern me, when I have undertaken, and professed to be governed by thee, and to do thy daily Will. Let it be therefore one of thy daily Blessings to me, to give me an industrious and active Spirit, and a Mind solicitous to do well, that I may perform whatever belongs to my Charge with Care and Diligence; and do thou, O Lord, according to thy good Pleasure, give a Blessing to it.

Hear my Prayer, O God, and go along with me in all I do; as thou didst give a Blessing to thy Servant *Jacob*, and make all Things prosper under his Hands: As thou wast always with thy Servant *Moses*, and with *Joshua*, and *Samuel*, and *David*, and thy protecting

Q

Mercies

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Mercies did accompany them at their going forth, and at their coming in, and in all their Undertakings; so, blessed Lord, let the same Mercies be ever with me, though unworthy of the least of them, and, under thy Protection, may Success attend me in every Part of my Duty.

Behold, O God, in thy Name I enter upon what I have undertaken ? I offer it to thy Glory, to whom all Things belong: Accept it, I beseech thee, with all the Labours of it, and, by thy Blessing, may I see the Fruit of my Endeavours: For I desire not the Prosperity of the Wicked, which turn all to their Misfortune; but I desire the Success of the Just, such as is the Effect of thy Goodness, and in which thou mayest be glorified. Bless me, O God, strengthen me, and be ever with me.

Resignation in any Business.

Almighty God, by whose Power and Will all Things are governed both in Heaven and Earth, mercifully assist me in this Affair, which I propose. What I design seems to me just and reasonable; but, not knowing how far it may be agreeable to thy holy Will, I come here to lay it before thee, and wholly to resign it into thy Hands.

If it be according to thy good Pleasure, and thou seest it for my good, I beseech thee to give a Blessing to it, and so to order all Things, by thy heavenly Influence, that it may come to a happy Issue. But, since we are subject to great Mistakes, in what we propose, and that very often proves our Unhappiness from which we had the Expectation of the greatest Good; since we are often eager for such Things which become to us very dangerous Snares, and the Seed of many Sins; therefore, O sovereign Lord, in this present Affair, I no otherwise press for Success, than as, in thy all-seeing Providence, thou knowest it for my Good; and, if thou seest it will prove otherwise, I then ask for no other Blessing, but that thou wilt find Means for manifesting thy Will in the Disappointment of what I propose.

For

For, far be it from me, that I should carry my Desires contrary to thy Will, or press them any farther than they are for thy Glory, and my eternal Good.

Thus, O God, I commit this Affair entirely into thy Hands, and, whatever my Inclination be, I make not that the Measure of my Petition, but I resign all to thy Will: Do as thou knowest best: Thou art Lord of All, and I desire thou shouldest govern in me. Grant only this, O God, that this may be, at all Times, the constant Disposition of my Heart, to think and rest in that, as best, whatever thou appointest. Thus let it be with me; thus may I always desire, always pray with Submission to thy holy Will. Lord, in this, and in all other Things, may thy Will be done, and not mine.

In a Doubt what is best to be done.

O God, who art the Light of the World, and a Guide to those who put themselves under thy Protection; behold, being at present under Difficulty, and not knowing what is best to be done, I seek Help from thee, desiring thee to be a Guide to me, and to determine me in the Resolutions I am to take.

My Desire is to do that which is best; but this being hid from me, who am nothing but Darknes, subject to great Mistakes and Indiscretions, I beseech thee, O merciful God, be thou a Light to me, and direct me; preserve me from ill Advice, from inconsiderate and rash Resolution, from all other Effects of my own or others Weakness; and grant I may do that which may be most to thy Glory, and my own Good.

Thou hast shewed this Mercy to thy Servants heretofore, in manifesting thy Will to them, and directing such as consulted thee. Thus thou wast a Guide to the Patriarchs, to Moses, to Joshua, to Samuel, to David, and many others: Have Compassion now on me, and shew this Mercy to me likewise; that having put myself into thy Hands, and, with all the Sincerity of my Heart, desired thy Conduct, I may find thy Promises fulfilled, that thou hearest and helpest those who call upon thee.

O God, behold, I have no Confidence in myself, but all my Trust is in thee: Help me therefore, according to thy great Mercy; be my Light and my Guide; preserve me from all Evil of Sin and Indiscretion; and grant, I beseech thee, I may now do thy holy Will,

Resignation in Pain.

SINCE it is thy blessed Will, O Lord, to visit me with this Illness, I am obliged to own the Justice of what thou dost, and to confess that thou art merciful, even while thou punishment me, for that my Sins deserve a much severer Scourge.

But consider, I beseech thee, O most merciful Lord, my great Weakness, and lay no more upon me than by thy Grace I shall be enabled to bear.

Give me Patience under this Trial, that I may bear it as becomes a Disciple of Christ; that I may bear it as my Cross, which, by thy Appointment, is laid upon me, and which I ought to carry in the Spirit of my Redeemer.

It is he himself has commanded me to take up my Cross, and follow him: Oh! that I could now follow him with a Submission, Humility, and Patience like to his: That now, when I am called to it, I may shew whose Disciple I am.

But this must be thy Gift, O God; for of myself I am nothing but Weakness and Sin.

Of myself I murmur and am impatient at every Thing that thwarts my Inclination, or is uneasy to me.

And now to bear it with Submission and Peace; this, O Lord, must be the Effect of thy Mercy to me.

Shew Mercy therefore, O Lord, to thy Servant; have Compassion on me, and help me.

Help me, O God, and give me Comfort, as thou didst to *Moses*, under all his Troubles.

Help me, O God, and give me Patience, as thou didst to *Job*, under all his Afflictions.

Help me, O God, and be my Relief, as thou wast to *Hezechias*, on his Bed of Sickness.

Help me, O God, and give me Courage, as thou didst to *Daniel* in the Lion's Den. Help

Help me, O God, and give me Perseverance, as thou didst to thy Servants, who, for thy Law, chearfully suffered all Manner of Torments, and even rejoiced in Death.

Infinite, I confess, O Lord, are the Instances of thy Mercy and Goodness to such as have been under Trials.

Enough to raise up my Hopes, and give me Encouragement to seek Help from thee.

To thee therefore, O God of Power and Mercy, I fly for Help; thou art my Refuge in Tribulation.

Assist me now, I beseech thee, according to my Weakness; succour me now according to my Wants.

This one Thing, at least, grant me, that, with an entire Submission, I may be resigned to thy Will.

That I may embrace thy present Appointments with a Conformity, such as is due from a sinful Creature to the Justice of his God.

For, what are all my Professions of being thy Servant, if now, knowing thy Will, I murmur against it?

What are my Professions of being a Sinner, if feeling thy Scourge, I rebel under it?

Suffer not this Weakness and Folly in me, O God; but give me Grace to be wise, in making a good Use of what I suffer.

I have followed my own Ways too much, and how often to thy Displeasure? Now, O God, let it be my Endeavour to follow thine.

If Nature be uneasy, let it be so. I have too much favoured it hitherto, even to the Offence of thee, my God; and is it not just it should now suffer?

It is most just, O God, it is most just: And, therefore, I now bow down before thee, and, with Submission, receive thy Scourge; confessing it to be just, that the Sinner and the Sin be punished.

O sovereign Judge of the Universe, I receive this Pain as the Accomplishment of thy holy Will, and as the just Punishment of my Sin; give me Grace to bear it as I ought, give me Grace to overcome the Unwillingness of Nature, and make it yield to thy Appointments.

Since I confess thee alone to be my God, let all that is within me bow down, and, in its Submission, acknowledge thee to be God: Let no rebel Humour be tolerated in me; but let all, with one Voice, cry out, thou art Lord of all: Lord, thy Will be done.

Thus, O most gracious Lord, give me Strength from above, for the Remedy of my Weakness; and do as thou knowest best for me, either relieve me in thy Mercy; or mercifully give me Grace to go under my Burthen with Patience.

Resignation in Sickness.

O Eternal God, who art pleased to visit me with this Illness, help me, I beseech thee, in thy Mercy, to bear it so, that, as it is the Chastisement of my Body, so it may be for the Good of my Soul.

Have Compassion on my Weakness; and, in whatever Degree my Diltemper shall be uneasy, or afflicting to me; so, accordingly, O Father of Mercies, give me thy Grace and Strength to bear it.

Give me such Patience, that I may receive with Submission all the Uneasiness of my Disease, the Trouble of Remedies, as likewise, whatever Provocations I seem to have from those that are about me.

Let thy heavenly Grace help me to govern my weak, corrupt, and rebellious Nature; that I may suppress all Inclinations to Murmuring or Impatience, that no one Word may come out of my Mouth, which is the Effect of these Evils.

Help me in removing all inward Disturbance, that, as often as my Uneasiness begins to rise, I may turn my Heart towards thee, and, by a Submission to thy holy Will, restore Peace to my Soul.

May I at all Times remember that, thy Will is holy and just; that it is my Duty to receive and approve whatever is appointed by thee.

May I remember that, in my Time, I have received infinite and great Blessings from thy Hand; and that it is reasonable for me to receive Troubles also, when thou art pleased to order them.

May I remember, when my Distemper afflicts, that it is the Sharpness of the Scourge which, by my Sins, I have drawn upon myself.

Let me always look upon the Hand which holds the Scourge; and, when I see it to be the Hand of Justice, the Hand of thee, my God, let me then silence all Complaints; let me then bow down and adore.

Thus, O merciful Lord, by the Effect of thy Grace, may I be patient, and humble, and resigned, throughout the whole Course of my Illness: And grant, O God, if it be thy blessed Will, that, being now under the Chastisement of my past Sins, I may not give new Provocations, by adding still new Sins to my former.

Shew this Mercy likewise to thy Servant, that I may be solicitous to do, and this without Delay, whatever is fitting, at this Time, either for settling my temporal Affairs, or doing Justice, or making Restitution where due, or asking Pardon where I have done Injury, or making Peace where I have any Difference; and, above all, in my best Endeavours for a sincere Repentance, and making my Peace with thee.

In these, and such other Particulars, suffer me, O God, to admit of no Neglect, or Delay; let me not be deceived with the Hopes of Recovery, or with the Fear of Death, or with the Difficulty of the Task, in Time of Sickness; for I know all these are Temptations, and, if hearkened-to, may be the Occasion of being surprized with sudden and unprovided Death: From which, I beseech thee, O God, deliver me.

I heartily wish, O merciful Lord, I had made a better Use of my Time of Health, even so far, that I might have had nothing left to do in this Sickness: But the Neglect of this has been my great Fault, and I most humbly beg thy Pardon for it. Pardon me, O Lord, in thy Mercy, and grant that now I may, with a just Solitude, lay Hold of this Opportunity in which thou art pleased to call upon me. I am certain it can never do me any Harm, to turn

towards thee, my God, and humble myself in Repentance; and, who knows but that, notwithstanding all my past Omissions, Thou mayest still be converted to thy Servant, and have Mercy?

That I may, this Moment, do one Part of my Duty, I now resign myself into thy Hands, begging thee to do with me as seems best in thy Sight. I earnestly implore thy Mercy to raise me up, if it be thy holy Will, from this Illness, and to grant me yet more Time, wherein I may reform my Life, and learn to be more faithful to thee. But, if this be not according to thy good Pleasure, Lord, I make no Exceptions; I submit to thy Sentence. Lord, thy Will be done; only this Mercy I ask, that, by thy Grace, I may be directed and enabled to do whatever may be best to prepare my Soul for its Departure out of this World, and to meet with a joyful Welcome into Eternity from thee, my Lord, and my God. Grant this, O God, and behold, with all the Powers of my Soul, I bow down, and say, Lord, thy Will be done.

In Sickness. To be repeated every Day.

IT being thy holy Will I should be visited with this Illness, I beseech thy infinite Goodness to have Compassion on me, and to give me Grace to bear, with Patience and Submission, all the Difficulties of it. Help me, O God, this Day, according to my Necessities, and mercifully grant I may in no Kind offend thee.

Deliver me, O blessed Lord, from this Sickness, and raise me up again, if it be thy holy Will, that I may reform all the Disorders of my Life, and more faithfully serve thee. But since I ask in this a Mercy, of which, through my Sins, I am unworthy, I therefore, as a Criminal, resign myself to thee, who art my Judge, to receive whatever Sentence is pronounced against me; believing it most just and reasonable, thy Will should be done in me.

But then, O God, be so merciful to thy Servant, as not to forsake me in my Distress, nor leave me to my own Weakness: For I can do nothing, O Lord, if left

left to myself. Stand by me, therefore, I beseech thee, all the Time of my Sicknes; be thou my Comfort, and my Strength; support my Soul under all its Weakness; defend me against all Temptations and Snares, against all Impatience and Dejection, and let my Heart be ever shut against all Thoughts of Despair.

Rather, O most gracious Lord, help me, by thy Grace, to improve under my Sicknes: May I confess, and adore, every Day, thy Justice, in the Punishment of Sin; may I offer, eve'y Day, what I suffer, in Submission to thy holy Will; may it help me to purify my Soul from all Corruption; may I learn from it, to despise, the World, and all that is earthly; may it raise my Heart to the Desire of a better Life; may it teach me to approach every Day towards thee, by the Endeavours of a true Repentance, and every Hour, more and more convince me, that in thee alone is my only Good, and that Death can be no Loss to me, if I gain thee.

Grant this my Petition, O merciful Lord, and so direct me by thy heavenly Light, that I may not omit, neglect, or delay any Thing, that is for my Soul's Good. Prepare me for whatever thou hast appointed; secure me against all the Flatteries and Terrors of the Enemy; and above all Things, give me a sincere Abhorrence of my Sins, that, whenever my Soul shall be summoned to appear before thee, I may chearfully surrender it, and find thee a loving Father and merciful God. Grant this, O God, and have Mercy on me.

O Almighty God, behold I recommend to thy fatherly Protection this thy Servant. Have Compassion on him (or her) and, if it be thy blessed Will, raise him (or her) up from the Bed of Sicknes, and restore him (or her) again, that he (or she) may be a Comfort to his (or her) Friends. We confess, O Lord, that all Things, both Life and Death, are in thy Power; and, if thou commandest, there is nothing can resist thy Will. Command then, we most earnestly beseech thee, O Lord, in Favour of thy Servant, that

being restored to Health, both he (or she) and we may praise and glorify thy Mercies.

Have Compassion on him (or her) now in this Distemper, and mercifully prepare him (or her) to go through whatever thou hast appointed. Be thou his (or her) Comfort and Strength, and suffer not the Enemy, in any Kind, to prevail against him (or her). Touch his Heart, we beseech thee, from above, that he may turn it towards thee; that he may be solicitous to do whatever his present Condition requires, both for Soul and Body; that he may seek thee with all his Soul, and, by a sincere Repentance, endeavour to obtain Pardon of all his past Offences. Forsake him not, O God, in this Day of his Distress, but, according to thy Promises, shew thyself a Father to him. Help him, O Lord, for in thee is our only Help.

For a Child sick.

TO thy fatherly Goodness, O God, I recommend this Child; have Compassion on him (or her) and send him Relief; his Innocence has not provoked thee, and we beseech thee not to punish our Iniquities in him. If, in thy comprehensive Knowledge, thou foreseeest his Life will be to thy Glory, raise him up, O Lord, that he may contribute to the Praise of thy Name, and be the Comfort of his Friends. But if he is likely to abuse thy Mercy, and not to prove faithful in thy Service, then, O God, I make no Petition in his Behalf; do what seems good in thy Eyes: For Life can be no Mercy to him, whose Life is to be followed with eternal Death. Do therefore, O Lord, what is the greatest Mercy to him; shew thyself a Father, and help him as thou knowest best.

At the Death of a Child.

GIVE me Patience, O God, under this Trial: It is difficult to Nature to be thus deprived of its Comfort; but since thou, O Lord, hast done it, behold, I am silent; I bow down, and say, Lord, thy holy Will, and not mine, be done. This I say with my Lips,

Lips, and I most humbly beseech thee, to give me such a true Conformity of Spirits, that my Heart may go with my Words, Lord, thy Will be done. Grant this, O God, that, now at this Time, I may join in Spirit with *Abraham*, and offer thee this Sacrifice, with the Submission of that holy Patriarch.

I must confess, O God, amidst all my Uneasiness, thou hast done, as a most loving Father, in taking my Child out of this World, in this Time of Innocence, when there is nothing to obstruct his eternal Happiness. For what truer Comfort can there be, than that my Child is now delivered from the infinite Dangers of this wicked World, and, without any Hazard, secured of Bliss? Can this be a Matter of Complaint to a Believer? Can it be a Subject of Grief, that one is arrived safe in the Port, and passed all the Danger of Storms? Can I pretend to love my Child, if at so great Preferment, as to be raised from Dust to Glory, I lament, as if some strange Misfortune had befallen him? Don't I see every Day the monstrous Corruption of this World, enough to believe it a Happiness, to be taken from it, and have it exchanged for Bliss!

If my Child were now permitted to speak to me, would it not justly reprove my Tears, and say? *If you loved me, you would rejoice, because I am gone to the Father.* Would it not turn to me, and say; *Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves?* I must confess, O God, there is too much Reason for such Reproval; for, if I have any true Love for my Child, I am obliged to rejoice in its happy Possession of thee; and no Tears are due to him, but all to myself, who am yet in a State of Mifery, and, after many Difficulties and Storms, know not, whether I shall ever be so happy, or may not be lost eternally. And is this such a desirable State, that I should grieve, because my Child is delivered from it! What if God should, in Punishment of my Impatience, again replace him here, to go through all these Hazards! What if, in the Hazard, he should miscarry!

No, my God, I know he is well, and my Grief is all Self-love. But, where are the Bowels of a Parent, if I will not bear my Loss, for his so great Gain? I submit, O blessed Lord; It is all well, what thou hast

haſt done. I am unreasonable and blind, and do not understand what is for my Good. Help me therefore, I beseech thee, to govern my Inclinations, to moderate my Paſſion, and teach me, with Peace, to ſubmit to thy Appointments. Now I have an Opportunity of making an Offering to thee: Grant, O Lord, I may now do it, and that I may not leave that for Time to do, which, by a Christian, ought to be done by the Strength of Reason and Faith. Suffer me not therefore any longer to be governed by Paſſion, and grieve like an Unbeliever; but now, through thy Grace, may I receive thy Orders with Chearfulneſs, and ſuffer as a Christian.

At the Death of a Friend.

IT is now the Hour of Trouble; and now is the Time, in which I am called to ſhew myſelf a Christian. My Comfort is taken from me, and Nature grieves; but it is thou, O Lord, haſt done it, and therefore I am bound to ſubmit. But, O God, thou knoweft my Weakneſs, and to thee is known, how great my Loſs is; and therefore I hope, thou wilt pardon all my Impatience, strengthen me under my Trial, and by heavenly Comforts refresh my Soul.

Help me, O merciful Lord, I beseech thee, in this Hour, and ſuffer me not to be overwhelmed with Paſſion: Nature is ready to ſink, but stand thou by me, O God, and ſupport me under this Storm: To thee I fly for Refuge, for behold, the World is bitter to me, I am robbed of my Comfort: But what could I expe&t? If I place my Comfort in Things that are mortal, I could look for nothing else, but to be ſeparated from them. The Condition of this World is to be here only for a Time; and, if I forget this, it is my Fault. I am to be thankful for the Blessings I have had; but, it being only lent me, I cannot wonder, at its being demanded by him to whom it belonged,

I confess, O God, thou art ſovereign Lord of all; Life and Death are in thy Hands; and all muſt be obedient to thee. If thou giueſt us Comforts, it is thy Mercy; and, if thou again takeſt them away, it is thy

Right,

Right, and no Body can ask, why thou doest so? And why then do I grieve and murmur at what thou hast been pleased to order? O God, I own it is a Fault. For thou art my Creator, and it is my Duty, who am but a poor Worm, to bend to thy Will in all Things, and approve it. I am a Sinner, and thou art a just Judge, and if thou punishest, it is what I ought to receive as my Due. If Nature then grieves at its Loss, that does like itself: But, since thou hast blessed me with *Reason* and *Faith*, these ought to govern Nature, give a Check to whatever is immoderate in it, and bring it into Subject to thy holy Will.

Grant therefore, O merciful God, that by Reason I may suppress all that is unreasonable in my Grief. And where can be the Reason of indulging immoderate Grief? Can I again recall the Friend I have lost, by my grieving? Can I prevail with God, by this Excess of Grief, to refresh my Soul with new Comforts? Can I do myself any Good, whether as to Soul or Body, by thus grieving? Nothing of this is to be expected; for, by such Passion, God is offended, and my Health prejudiced. There can be no Reason then for thus afflicting myself: Wherefore, I beseech thee, O Lord, that I may so effectually make Use of my Reason, as to expel from my Heart all that is unreasonable.

Help me, O God, in this Particular, because Nature is violent, and with Obstinacy pushes me on, to what is not agreeable to Reason or Faith; and if I act thus, like an Unbeliever, how can I expect thy Favour, I going on in thy Displeasure, at a Time when I most want thy Help?

Shew Mercy therefore to me, and since the Case is common to all; since all must be separated from their Friends, since *Abraham* is dead, and the Prophets are dead; since the Powerful, the Rich, and the Mighty of so many Ages past are all dead; since all that are now alive must certainly die; since my Misfortune is so far from being particular, grant, O merciful Lord, I may bear it with Submission due to the necessary Conditions of this our mortal State; and that what by thy Appointment, is made the Punishment of Sin, I may receive with the Humility of an Offender; who, knowing

his Crime, peaceably submits without Complaint to the Hand of Justice.

With this Submission, O blessed Lord, restore Peace to my Soul, and grant me so much true Discretion, as instead of lamenting what is lost, to consider what I may gain. How much would it be to my Soul's Advantage, if, disgusted at perishing Goods, I should turn my Heart to those that are eternal; if I should despise all earthly Comforts, as most treacherous to their Admirers, and fix my Heart on those which cannot deceive nor forsake me! This, I question not, is one Design of thy fatherly Providence, in visiting us with Afflictions, that, finding the World bitter to us, we may take off our Affections from it, and turn to something more lasting.

Grant, O God, I may make this Use of my present Affliction, take this Occasion of falling out with a deceitful World, and think of no other Comforts, but in thee. How much wiser would this be, than to let fruitless Sighs consume my Hours, and my Soul be wasted by sullen Grief? How much better might I employ my Tears in repenting for my Sins, and letting Contrition have the Enclosure of my troubled Spirit? Ah, my God, this would certainly have a good Effect, even of eternal Joy. But now, as it is, I weep, and mourn, and afflict myself, but all to no Purpose.

It is the same as to my Affections; I set them on Creatures, and these soon forsake me. If I should now turn them to thee, my God, and seek no other Satisfaction but in thy Goodness, this would be a Comfort that could never fail me, but would go on encroaching even beyond the Grave. O most gracious Lord, shew this Mercy to thy Servant, that I may be so wise, to make this Advantage of my present Trouble. Then, O Lord, shall I have Reason to bless thy Name for all Eternity, and date my Happiness from what now seems the severest Scourge. Grant me Patience, O God, and help me to be thus wise to Eternity.

For one that takes evil Ways.

O God of all Comfort, and Father of Mercy, look with the Eye of Compassion upon this thy Creature, who has forsaken the Ways of thee, his sovereign Lord and Creator. Touch his Heart from above, that he may be sensible of his Iniquity; open his Eyes, that he may see his Unhappiness; and give him such effectual Grace, that he may break all his Bonds, and return, with all his Heart, to serve thee, his Lord and his God.

Thou hast published thy Mercies, O Lord, above all thy Works, and solemnly declared, thou wilt not the Death of a Sinner, but that he be converted and live; manifest now this Mercy, I most humbly beseech thee, in this thy Servant: Call upon him, and open his Heart, that he may hear thy Voice; thou hast infinite Expedients for awakening Sinners, and seizing them with a Horror of their Crimes. Make Use of such here as will prevail; omit nothing that may give him a Sense of his Duty. Whatever thou wilt here, O Lord, so he be not eternally miserable.

Suffer him, O merciful Lord, no longer to walk in the Paths of Death, nor to be deluded with the Snares of Sin. For though by his Sins he becomes unworthy of all thy Favours, yet still he is the Work of thy Hands, and we beseech thee, not to despise what thou hast made, nor to let his Iniquities obstruct thy Mercy: Especially, since the greater his Unworthiness is, the more glorious will be thy Mercy towards him. Help him therefore, O Lord, that he may be saved, and thy Name be for ever glorified for thy Mercy to Sinners.

O God, who didst shew Mercy to thy Servant *David*, and, after his great Crimes, didst touch his Heart with the Sense of his Iniquities, and call him to Repentance: Shew the like Mercy, I beseech thee, to this thy Servant, and grant him such a lively Sense of his own unhappy State, that renouncing his evil Ways, he may sincerely repent of his Sins, and for the Time to come, be faithful in thy Service.

O God,

O God, by whose Mercy that wicked King *Manasses* was called from all his Abominations, and, by a true Repentance, was again received into thy Favour: Let the same Mercy awaken this thy Servant, and give him such an Abhorrence of all the Evil he has done, that with Violence he may break from all the Occasions of his Sin, and desire no other Comforts, but in the Peace of a good Conscience, in sincerely loving thee, and faithfully serving thee.

O God, who hadst Compassion on the *Ninivites*, and didst remember them in thy Mercy, amidst their manifold Crimes: Grant, I beseech thee, the same Bowels of Compassion may be moved upon this unhappy Sinner, and that, notwithstanding all his Provocations, he may still find thee a Father to him; suffer him not to perish, O God, in his Wickedness, but mercifully call him to Repentance.

O blessed Jesuſ, who cameſt into this World to call Sinners to Repentance; have Mercy on this thy Servant, and grant him true Repentance of all his Sins.

O blessed Jesuſ, who cameſt to ſeek the lost Sheep; behold here a poor, unhappy Sheep, that is gone astray: Follow him, I beseech thee, and by thy Grace, bring him again into the Fold; where he may for ever hear thy Voice and follow thee.

O blessed Jesuſ, who in weeping over *Jerusalem*, didſt ſhew thy Compassion for Sinners; have Mercy on this Sinner, and grant, he may know the Time of his Visitation, and understand the Things that are for his eternal Peace.

O blessed Jesuſ, who didſt ſhew thy great Mercy in calling *Mattbeuſ* from his sinful State, in forgiving *Zaccheus*, *Magdalen*, *Peter*, and other Sinners; have Mercy on this Sinner, powerfully call him from his Iniquities, and graciously forgive him.

O blessed Jesuſ, who haſt offered thyſelf a Sacrifice for the Ransom of Sin; may thy ſacred Blood plead for this unhappy Sinner, and, by the Merits of thy Paſſion, may all his Sins be forgiven.

O blessed Jesuſ, who art ſeated at the right Hand of the Father, to become an Advocate for Sinners; undertake,

dertake, I beseech thee, the Cause of this Sinner, and since all Things are in thy Power, obtain for him whatever Graces and Helps are necessary for quitting all his evil Ways, and becoming a new Creature: Grant this, O Jesu, that thou mayest be glorified in the Conversion of such a Sinner.

O blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, have Mercy on this unhappy Sinner; take from him all Obstinacy and Blindness; soften his Heart, that he may receive the Impression of thy holy Grace; and give him such inward Strength, such Discretion, such christian Resolution and Courage, that, despising all earthly and sinful Satisfactions, he may break from all the Occasions of his Sin, and, pursuing the Way of Virtue, may find such Comforts in it, as may carry him on with Perseverance, till he come at length to receive the Rewards thou hast promised to such as faithfully return to thee. Grant this, O Gd, and be thou a God and a Redeemer to him.

For one who is Careless in his Duty, or takes greater Liberties than are fitting.

A Lmighty and everlasting God, look with Compassion on this thy Servant, whom I now recommend to thy particular Mercy. Open his Eyes, I beseech thee, that he may see and consider the Duties which belong to him as a Christian, and likewise the particular Obligations of his State. Give him Grace to observe all his Failings, and the many Ways in which he is wanting to his Duty.

For this End, I most earnestly beseech thee, O blessed God, deliver him from all ill Company, and from such hurtful Conversation, as are an Encouragement to him in all his Weakness. Let it be thy Mercy to him to see the great Injury these do him, to see the Vanity and Folly of all such Satisfactions, and hence conceive such a Dislike, as to turn his Heart against them, and for ever to break from them.

Help him, O merciful God, in this great Point, give him Strength to stand against the Violence of all ill Customs, against the Force of Inclination, and all such

such other Arguments as the Devil and the World may make Use of, in Defence of what is sinful. Confirm him likewise, O God, against all other Snares, that he may no longer go on in such Ways, as are so prejudicial to all his Concerns, both of Soul and Body, and so very afflicting to those that belong to him.

For his more effectual Help in this, I beseech thee to correct all the Errors of his Judgement, and to root out all those ill Principles which encourage him in his daily Neglects, and in the undue Liberties he takes. Season his Mind, O God, with better Maxims, even with those of the Gospel, and from these, O blessed Lord, and not from corrupt Practice, may he take the Measures of a christian Life.

From this Rule may he learn what it is to be a Christian; how he ought to love thee and fear thee; and how solicitous he ought to be in walking uprightly, according to all thy Commandments. From this may he learn, that the World is at Enmity with God, and that the Ways of the World are contrary to the Ways of God.

Make him likewise sensible, O merciful Lord, of all the Dangers of Sin, that he may be careful to avoid them. Give him a true Knowledge of his own Corruption, that he may be watchful in standing against it.

Teach him also, O Lord, in thy Mercy, how great are the Sins of living an unprofitable Life, of not redeeming the Time, of neglecting Family, or Estate, of wasting Money, of living in the continual Danger of Sin, of keeping sinful, profane, or atheistical Company, of being Witness to, and making a Divertisement of what is displeasing to God, of wasting Life in Vanity, Sloth, Prodigality, Intemperance, Gaming, and whatever else is agreeable to a corrupt Inclination and Self-love.

Convince him, O God, how contrary this is to what the Gospel prescribes, of loving God with all our Heart, of seeking first, and before all Things, the Kingdom of God, of hating the World, denying ourselves, of putting off the old Man, of crucifying the Flesh, of not being conformed to this World, of not living to ourselves,

of living soberly, righteously, and godly; of seeking the Things that are above, and doing all to Edification; of letting our Light shine before Men; of doing all to the Glory of God; of proving what is the good, acceptable, and perfect Will of God; of working out Salvation with Fear and Trembling; of striving to make our Election sure; of presenting our Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God; of being ever watching, ever prepared against the Time when the Spouse will call.

Give him a Sense, O God, of these Truths which the Gospel prescribes, as Rules to all its Professors, and convince him, I beseech thee, how far he departs from them. Let this be a seasonable Confusion to his careless, dissipated, and worldly Soul, and put him upon Resolutions of reforming all his present Disorders, and of being truly in earnest in what belongs to Eternity. Grant this, O merciful Lord, that we may have the Comfort of seeing him reformed, his Soul have the Benefit, and thou, O God, the Glory: To whom be all Praise and Glory for ever.

On a Journey.

TO thy Protection, O God, we recommend ourselves in this Journey: Accompany us, we beseech thee, in all our Ways, and suffer not the Enemy to have any Power over us. Be thou, O merciful Lord, our Security against all Dangers: Preserve us from the Hands of Robbers, and let no Violence be offered to us. Deliver us likewise from all other Misfortunes, and let no ill Accident interrupt the Comfort of our Journey or stop us in our Way. Preserve us in Health, and grant us a seasonable Time. Be thou our Guide, and our Helper; and let it be thy Mercy to us, to keep us from all Kinds of Sin, that, while we are in Want of thy Protection, we may not provoke thee to forsake us, by rendering ourselves unworthy of what we ask.

O God, who didst call *Abraham* out of his Country, and wast both his Guide and Protector in all his Way: Shew us now the like Mercy, and, under thy Conduct, may we come safe to our Journey's End.

O God,

O God, who, by thy Wonders, didst lead *Moses* through difficult Ways ; who, both by Day and Night, wast a Guide to him ; didst support and relieve him in all his Distress, and wast his Security in the midst of the greatest Dangers ; grant, we beseech thee, that, moved by these Wonders of thy fatherly Goodness, we may entirely confide in thy Protection, and that, whatever Difficulties appear, we may ever retain this Hope, and not fail of that Assistance which thou hast promised to such as put their Trust in thee. Grant this, O God, in thy Name we begin our Journey ; let us go on in Peace, and happily finish it, through Christ our Lord, *Amen.*

For a Happy Death.

O God, by whose Appointment I am here, in the Pilgrimage of this Life, having Breath lent me for a Time, but, being soon to surrender it up into thy Hands who gavest it, grant, I beseech thee, I may be prepared for that Moment, that whenever my Soul shall be summoned to appear before thee, it may find, in thee, the Comforts of a loving Father and merciful Judge.

For this End I implore thy particular Grace, that my Life may be a daily Preparation for Death, and that I may live every Day as if it were to be my last : That I may be thus wise to Eternity, grant, O blessed Lord, I may every Day call myself to an Account, and look into the true State of my Soul ; suffer me not, I beseech thee, to tolerate any sinful Practice within myself, nor go on blind under the Enjoyment of a false Peace, nor continue in any Guilt under any Pretext whatever.

Let it be my continual Endeavour to war against Sin, and to be watchful in avoiding all the Dangers and Occasions of it. Give me Discretion in discerning all the Snares of the World, or corrupt Practice of the Devil and Self-love, and Strength to stand against them. Let a sincere Repentance cancel all my past Guilt, and may it be my constant Practice, by daily Sighs of a contrite Heart, to wipe away the Sins of

of every Day. And therefore, far be it from me, O God, to delay the Amendment of my Life, or to put my Confidence in a Death-bed Repentance. This, I am sensible, is a very great Delusion, the Loss of infinite Souls; From this Blindness, O God, deliver me.

Thus, O blessed Lord, may I go on, still using my best Endeavours to improve in Virtue, to do Good to all, and by good Works to make my Election sure. May my Heart be inflamed with thy holy Love, ever solicitous to walk in thy Commandments, and, both in doing and suffering, to do thy Will. In this Method may I live on in this World, but waiting till my Change comes for a better.

And, when this comes, stand by me then with thy Almighty Power, and be my merciful Protector. Let not the Enemy prevail against me; but comfort my Soul with thy infinite Mercies. Preserve me from all Temptations, but, above all, from Despair and Presumption. Secure me against all inward Disturbance and Terrors, and grant this one Petition, that, giving up my Soul full of Faith, Hope, and Charity, I may meet with this happy Welcome from thee: *Well done, good and faithful Servant, enter into the Joy of thy Lord.* Grant this, O Lord, through the Merits of my Redeemer, that I may glorify thy holy Name for all Eternity.

For all that are now in their last Sickness and Agony.

O G O D, the Comforter of the Distressed, look with Compassion, I beseech thee, on all those who are now in their last Sickness, and are to have no Relief, but by Death; give them a Sense of their Danger and great Duty, that they may make the best Use of whatever Time yet remains, to prepare for their appearing before thee. Grant, O merciful God, that as many of them, as are under any Delusion of Errors, may now renounce all such Errors, and, manifesting their hearty Desires of receiving all thy saving Truths, may, by the Sincerity of such Desires, be, in Spirit, united to the Number of thy Faithful.

Give

Give them all a sincere Repentance of whatever Sins they have committed, and grant they may omit nothing that is necessary for making their Peace with thee. Direct them in satisfying all whatever Duties Justice or Charity may demand of them; so to make Restitution for all the Wrong they have done, and to be reconciled from their Hearts with every Neighbour.

And for those, O God, who are now in their Agony, shew thyself a merciful Father to them; be thou their Comfort and Strength, and, amidst all their Anguish, refresh their Souls with heavenly Light. Forsake them not, O God of all Comfort, in this Hour of their Distress, and let not any Unworthiness turn away thy Mercies from them. Give them Strength against all Temptations and Snares; quicken their Faith, and confirm them in Hope, that no Terrors whatever may be able to deject them. Grant them a lively Confidence in the Merits of their Redeemer, and let that infinite Price, paid for Sinners, be their Support against all immoderate Fears. Grant, O God, they may fly to thee for Refuge, and that, seeing nothing but Grounds of Despair from their own Weakness, they may lay hold of the Blood of thy only Son; may rest in the Arms of thy infinite Goodness, and in the Promises of thy Mercy, and, thus raised up with Hope, may surrender their Souls, with Comforts, into thy Hands. Hear this my Petition, O most merciful Lord, in Behalf of these poor Souls; relieve them, I beseech thee, in their Distress, and by comforting Refreshments, may they now find thee to be their God.

For such as seek the Truth.

O Blessed Jesus, who art the eternal Truth, and hast promised, that all who seek shall find; fulfil now thy Promises, I beseech thee, in all those Christians who, being engaged in Error, are sincerely desirous to find the Truth of thy Gospel. Have Regard to their Desires, and hear their Sighs. Be thou a Light to them, direct them in seeking, and give a Blessing to their Endeavours. Confirm them against all Mistakes, and

and against the Delusions of all those, whoever they be, who lie in Wait to deceive. Let not worldly Motives prevail with them, while they are in Search for Heaven; and give them Courage to despise all for the Sake of Truth. O Jesus, thou callest upon all to come to thee; behold, these call upon thee, they desire to come to thee; shew Mercy to them, I beseech thee, and hear their Prayers.

In Doubts of Conscience.

HAVE Compassion on me, O God, and mercifully deliver me from the Perplexity in which I am; be a Helper to me, and direct me in fulfilling thy blessed Will. Thou seest the Danger in which I am of ruining myself; of being misled by my own deceitful Passions; of being drawn into the Snares of the Enemy; of framing to myself a false, rash, and erroneous Conscience; of mistaking Light for Darkness, and Darkness for Light. And, if this be my unhappy Condition, what will become of my Soul.

Direct me, therefore, in this important Enquiry, O my God; and never let me be so miserable as to forsake my Duty, and lose my Soul. As thou didst shew Mercy to *Cornelius* and direct him to *Peter*, by whom he was to be taught the Way to Heaven: As thou didst shew Mercy to *Saul*, and sent him to *Ananias*, by whom he was to be instructed concerning thy holy Will: So likewise, O God of infinite Goodness, shew Mercy to me, though an unworthy Sinner, that I may both have Light to know my Duty, and Courage to comply entirely with it.

Hear my Prayer, O God, in this great Affair of Eternity, and so temper my Soul, by thy Grace, that, while I seek the Truth, I may not be obstinate against it. In order to this, I beseech thee, to take from me all Blindness, and Corruption of Judgement: Let no Kind of Interest, worldly Considerations, or human Respects, put any Bias upon me; let not Education, Custom, or Affection, prevail against Truth; but let my Soul be prepared with that Freedom as is due to thee.

Afflict

Assist me, most merciful Father, in this Proposal which I have before me; give me Understanding and Courage, as the Affair requires, and suffer me not to be deluded while thou knowest my whole Desire is to find thee, and to do thy Will. Stand by me, O God, and be thou my Guide; for thus only can I come to thee.

For the Church of Christ.

O GOD, who, by the Blood of thy only Son, hast purchased to thyself a Church, and which was so loved by Christ, thy Son, that he gave himself for it; grant, I beseech thee, that the Mercy of this thy own Institution may never fail, but that it may be still secured under the Protection of the same Power and Goodness by which it was at first ordained. Let thy holy Spirit watch over it, to lead it into all Truth; and may thy Almighty Power make good what thy Mercy to Man has promised, That the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

Purge it, I beseech thee, from all Corruptions and Abuses, and mercifully take away all Scandals from it. Be thou a Blessing to all its Pastors; may nothing discrediting be found in them, that their Ministry be not blamed. Make them, as so many Lights, shining to the World; may nothing worldly, but only a Zeal for thy Law, govern in them.

Have Mercy likewise on the whole Flock, wherever spread throughout the World. Preserve them in Peace and Truth, and may they follow Righteousness as becomes the Members of the mystical Body of Christ their Head.

May its saving Truths be received throughout the World, as thou hast promised, and all Nations of the Earth be united in one Fold. For which End I beseech thee to have Mercy on all those barbarous People, who, being yet in Darkness, have not the Knowledge of Thee and Christ thy Son. Provide them Means, O merciful God, by which thy Gospel may be preached to them, and prepare their Hearts to receive it, that, being thus enlightened by Faith, they may

may partake of the Redemption which Christ has wrought for them.

For the State of Christendom.

O God, by whose Mercy so many Nations of the *Gentiles* have been converted to the Faith of Christ, perfect now, I beseech thee, this Mercy to them, that, by their own Corruption, or Blindness, they may not be deprived of that Happiness which thy fatherly Goodness has designed for them.

Give them all a sincere Zeal for Truth, even for that Truth which was delivered to them by the Apostles. Root out all Heresies from amongst them, whatever and wherever they be; take from them all that Blindness, Delusion, and Perverseness, by which Errors and Corruptions are maintained with Zeal, which belongs only to thy Truths. Heal all their Schisms, by which a Scandal is brought upon the christian Name, and it is become a Reproach to Unbelievers.

O blessed Jesus, who hast shed thy Blood for the Salvation of Man, look upon the unhappy State of divided *Christendom*, and have Compassion on it. See how thy glorious Institution is disfigured; Confusions and Schisms are broken in where thou commandest Unity and Peace to be kept: Animosities, Malice, and Revenge, have taken the Place of that mutual Love which thou didst so strictly enjoin its Professors; so that now, instead of loving (the Mark of thy Disciples) they seek to destroy one another; and thy Name is blasphemed, through their Disorders and Wickedness, who confess it.

This is the Desormity of those that call themselves thy People: Have Compassion, O Jesus, and, in thy great Mercy, send Relief. Raise up the Spirit of the primitive and apostolic Times, and let the Enemy no more prevail, to the Ruin of so many Souls, and the Infamy of thy most holy Profession. Chase away the Spirit of worldly Interest and Pride from their Hearts, who undertake to teach the Spirit of Jesus Christ and his Gospel, and establish them in such a sincere Desire of a general Peace, that they may make it the

R

Subject

Subject of their daily Prayers, and Endeavours, to recover the Unity of the first Believers, and to see them all, with one Faith and one Mouth, giving Glory to God.

Preserve likewise, I beseech thee, all christian Princes in a good Correspondence of Peace, and so settle all public Affairs, as thou knowest may most effectually contribute to the public Good of *Christendom*, and the Glory of thy holy Name. Wherefore I most earnestly implore thy Grace, in Behalf of all christian Princes; take them all into thy Protection, and give them such a Spirit of true Piety and solid Wisdom, that they may be able to satisfy their great Charge for the Good of their People; and not only be solicitous for worldly Greatness, but much more how they may concur, in removing Scandals, in encouraging Virtue, and establishing Unity amongst all that believe in Christ.

For this End, let it be thy Mercy to provide them with such Council as may be Men of Principles, such as, influenced by solid Religion, will give the public Good, at all Times, the Preference to their own Interest, Ambition, or other private Concerns; and who are not to be prevailed on to betray the Cause of Justice and Truth.

Grant, likewise, O merciful God, to all Pastors, in whatever Communion they be, such a Spirit that they may daily lament the Divisions of *Christendom*, and express a common Zeal for healing them. Let this Spirit be such as was given to the Apostles, not of Fierceness and Passion, but of Meekness; may the same heavenly Light attend them, to discover to them the Things that are for Peace; and, in this holy Disposition, may they all unite their Labours, and have thy Blessing for bringing all to a good Effect. O God, how glorious would *Sion* be, were all united in one Faith !

For our Nation.

O Sovereign Lord, to whom all Kingdoms of the Earth are subject, under whose Protection they are safe, and by whose Blessing alone they can prosper; have

have Mercy on this Nation, I beseech thee, and make it happy under thy Protection and Blessing.

Remove from it all those Evils which, in any Kind, are a Provocation to thee. Thou seest, O God, the distracted Condition of it, in Matters of Religion; and, amongst these many Divisions, thou knowest who are the Professors of thy Apostolic Truths. To these Truths, I beseech thee, O God of infinite Mercy, to give a Blessing; direct all to them by thy heavenly Light, and may it be thy Blessing to this People, to unite all in the Profession of them.

As the Truth is known to thee, so likewise are all Errors, Corruptions, false Doctrines, Heresies, and Schisms. And because all these are very displeasing to thee, and therefore injurious to as many Souls as are unhappily engaged in them; hence, with all the Earnestness of my Soul, I lay them before thee, and, without any Exception of Congregation, or Person, I implore thy Goodness for the Remedy of them, whatever and wherever they be.

For this End, I beseech thee, O God, to give to all Teachers and People a Zeal for Truth; and may this Zeal, O blessed Lord, be so impartial in them, as heartily to beg thy Blessing on that which thou knowest to be Truth; without any Restriction laid by Education, Mistake or Interest. In this, O God, may all be united: And, let the Sincerity of this Request find such Acceptance with thee, as to extend thy Mercy to all, in removing Obstinacy and Blindness; and by communicating to all a true Light, by which all those, whoever they be, who are in Error, may discern their Errors, and forsake them, and those who profess the Truth of thy Gospel, may be confirmed in the Profession of it.

For carrying on this great Work, inspire, O God, both Teachers and People, with the Spirit of Moderation and Meekness, that all may have a true Compassion for one another; that they may lay aside all Rancour and Malice, and, putting on the Bowels of Charity, may strive, with a holy Emulation, to out-do each other, in Tenderness and brotherly Love. Thus may all contribute to the Salvation of all, and, in one

Assembly, come to praise thy Name, with one Heart, and with one Mouth. Grant this, O God, I beseech thee, and shew Mercy to this Nation.

Enlarge this thy Mercy, most gracious Lord, by taking from among us the Spirit of Atheism, Irreligion, and Prophaneness. These are the greatest of Evils, and we cannot expect thy Scourges to be removed, as long as this Infidelity finds such Encouragement amongst us. Help us, therefore, I beseech thee, and put a Stop to this growing Evil. Touch the Hearts of those unhappy ones, O God, who thus openly make War against thee, and help to corrupt the Minds of Youth, propagating their wicked Principles amongst those whose better Education ought to give them an Abhorrence of such Conversation. In this Particular, I beseech thee, shew Mercy to us, that we may not again be delivered up to Infidelity, as has been the sad Fate of many Nations, once Christians, but now having renounced this Name.

Another Mercy I still ask of thee, that thou wouldest vouchsafe to purge this Nation from all those notorious Crimes by which thy Anger is so much provoked against us; from Usury and Uncleanness, from Gluttony and Drunkenness, from Prodigality and Idleness, from Injustice, Frauds, and Malice, from Sedition, Pride, and all Kinds of Uncharitableness; and whatever others there are, by which we are made the Object of thy Displeasure. In all these Distempers, O God, be thou our Physician, and mercifully deliver us; send thy holy Spirit amongst us, by which all those, who walk in the Ways of Iniquity, and have departed from thee, their God, may have a true Sense of their unhappy State; may be ashamed of their Folly and Sin; may abhor their interior Deformity, and resolve, in earnest, upon beginning a new Life.

Hear this my Petition, O God, that we may become a chosen People, holy and acceptable in thy Sight; that we may walk in all Precepts, observe thy Ordinances, and thus prepare for those great Blessings, promised to such as seek thee, and serve thee.

And, in this, O God, grant that all those, who have the largest Portion of earthly Blessings, may be an Example

Example and Encouragement to the rest. For this End, I beseech thee to shew thy particular Mercy to them ; give them a true Sense of those Blessings, by which thou hast distinguished them from infinite others, who are to labour for Bread, and direct them, by thy Grace, to make a good Use of what they have received. Teach them what Justice and Gratitude demand of them ; and, how great is the Crime of abusing thy Favours in the Service of Vice.

Grant, O God, they may, in all Points, live as become Christians ; that they may renounce all profane and extravagant Liberties, that they may not consume their Lives and Estates in Luxury, Gaming, and Intemperance ; but that, being zealous in forsaking and discountenancing all Evil, they may study to do Good in their Generation, be the Comfort of their Families, the Honour of their Nation, and become as eminent, in all the Practices of a virtuous Life, as they are in the Rank which they hold in this World.

Give to all others the Blessings which are peculiar to their respective States, that they may faithfully satisfy the Obligations belonging to them. Grant, O God, they may have a Zeal for thy Law ; may observe thy Precepts ; may be obedient to their Governors ; may live in Peace and Charity with all ; and, striving to increase in all Good, may be found worthy to partake of thy Promises.

Shew this Mercy, O God, to this Nation, take away all thy Scourges from it, and replenish it, I beseech thee, with heavenly Blessings, that we may for ever praise thy Name, and thou be glorified amongst the Nations.

In Publick Calamity.

I Confess, O sovereign Lord, the Justice of the Scourge that is upon us, we have provoked it by our Iniquities ; our manifold Crimes have drawn it upon our own Heads, and we are obliged to confess before thee, that it is not thou, O Lord, but our own Sins are become our Punishment.

But if our Punishment be from ourselves, our Relief must come from thee, O Lord. Behold then, having no Confidence in ourselves, but in the Multitude of thy tender Mercies, we prostrate ourselves before thee, confessing our Iniquities, and appealing to thy Goodness to have Compassion on us.

Look upon us, we beseech thee, and with the Eye of Pity have regard to our Misery. See what we suffer, and in thy Mercy, send us Relief. Let not thy Inheritance be wasted, nor thy People be consumed; but, for the Honour of thy Name, succour those who believe and put their Trust in thee.

Let thy Wrath, O God, be appeased upon us; let not thy Anger abide for ever; for, though we are unworthy, and can pretend to no Favour, yet still thy Mercies are infinite; and it is for the Glory of thy Goodness, to help those who are in Distress. Nay, thou hast promised to hear such as call upon thee in their Tribulation, and to be a Conforter to those who in their Affliction send up their Sighs to thee.

Hear us therefore, for behold we are delivered up to Destruction, and our only Help is in thee. We call upon thee, we beg thee to have Compassion; we appeal to the Bowels of thy tender Mercies, and beseech thee to appear in our Relief. Have Mercy on us, O God, have Mercy on us, and take from us the Scourge which we deserve for our Sins.

O God, who in former Ages hast signalized thy Mercies in sparing thy People, when, for their great Iniquities, thou hadst resolved to destroy them; and in often removing thy Judgements, which were the Punishment of their Sins: Let the Mercies of the new Law equal those of the old, and though the severest of Judgements be due to our Sins, yet have Compassion, O God, and let thy Mercy take Place: Punish us not, we beseech thee, according to our Unworthiness, but spare thy People, now humbling themselves before thee, and manifest thy Goodness for the Glory of thy Name.

O God, who didst hear thy Servant *David*, and, upon this Humiliation, command the destroying Angel to sheath his Sword; let the same Compassion now touch

touch thee; receive our Petition with Favour, and mercifully prevent the Ruin that threatens us.

O God, who by thy Mercy didst invite the rebellious *Israelites*, and, upon their Repentance, didst promise to remove thy Judgements, with which they were then afflicted for their Sins: Be no less favourable to us; but, since we own the Justice of the Hand that is upon us, and now freely seek to thee for Shelter, receive our Submission, and granting us a true Repentance, let us experience thy Mercy in being delivered from all Evils.

O Jesus, who, by thy almighty Power, didst deliver thy Apostles from the Storm in which they were in Danger of perishing; and didst mercifully stretch forth thy Hand to *Peter*, when he was now sinking under the Waves; shew the like Mercy to us thy Servants, and, since we call upon thee, suffer us not to perish in this Storm. Shew rather thy Power, and command a Calm; in the mean Time, stretch forth thy Hand of Mercy to us; support our Weakness; give us Patience, Courage, and Perseverance, that we faint not, but abide faithful to the End.

For P A R E N T S.

For I S S U E.

O GOD, who hast appointed the State of Marriage for the Propagation of Mankind, and for filling up the Seats of Glory in thy eternal Kingdom; grant, I beseech thee, that being engaged in this State, I may obtain thy Grace, for duly satisfying all the Obligations of it, and that, by thy Blessing, I may become fruitful.

It was thou, O God, who saidst to our first Parents, encrease and multiply, and replenish the Earth: And by thy Blessing was their Seed multiplied, and they saw their Children's Children to many Generations. Grant, O most sovereign Lord, that, being descended of their Seed, I may partake of their Blessing, and from me also may the Number be increased, who may

faithfully serve thee here on Earth, and be admitted at length to the Fellowship of thy Glory.

O God, by whose particular Favour was taken from *Rachel* and *Hannah* the Reproach of their Barrenness, and the Comfort of Children was given to them; shew the like Mercy to me, and grant me the Comfort I now ask, that being delivered from Barrenness, I may bless thee in my Generation, and, mindful of thy Favours, may for ever praise thy Name.

I confess, O God, it is by thy Power and Goodness all Creatures bring forth their Fruit: The Earth, the Sea, the Fowls of the Air, with all other Things that have any Kind of Life in them: None can give any Encrease, but as it is thy Gift in them: Wherefore I come now, humbling myself before thee, acknowledging this thy Power, and confessing that on this Power is my Dependance. Be favourable therefore to me, I beseech thee, in this Point, and let not my Unworthiness turn away thy Mercies from me.

But while I make this Petition, yet still, O God, it is with an entire Submission to thy blessed Will; if it be for thy Honour, and thou seest it for my Good: Far be it from me to desire any Thing which may not be conducing to thy Glory; such Comforts I cannot desire. And therefore, O God, I chuse rather to be barren, than to bring forth Children which will take evil Ways, and forsake thee, their Lord and Creator. I chuse Barrenness ten thousand Times, rather than bring forth Children to be eternally miserable, and be the everlasting Companions of Devils. Now, this being hidden from me, and only known to thee, therefore I leave my Petition wholly in thy Hands; desiring no Grant of it but on this Condition, if thou seest the Children I shall bring forth will be thy Servants. Thus, O God, I resign this Affair wholly to thee: Do as thou knowest best. Lord, thy Will be done.

Upon Conceiving, and afterwards.

I Return thee Thanks, O God, that thus thou hast been pleased to order it. And now, O merciful Father, hear my Petition, I beseech thee, which I lay before

before thee. I know all Things are in thy Power, and thou dispensest thy Blessings as thou thinkest fit. Give a Blessing, I most humbly beseech thee, to the Fruit I have conceived, and frame it so, with such a good Disposition, that it may be docile, and easily inclined to Good.

I see a great Difference in the Tempers of Children, and of Youth; that while some, through a giddy, unsettled, or perverse Mind, are exposed to infinite Hazards, and easily are drawn into Wickedness; others are much more cautious, settled, and reserved, and with great Facility embrace that which is good. Thus their temporal and eternal Good seems very much to depend on the Dispositions of their Mind and Body; and I cannot but own a good Disposition to be a very great Blessing.

This Blessing I ask of thy fatherly Hand: Since therefore the Child, with which I now go, is in thy Hand, as the Clay in the Hand of the Potter, frame it so; I beseech thee, that it may become a Vessel of Honour. Mould it in such a Temper, that it may be easy in receiving what is good; that it may be inclined to thy Ways. Give it Caution and Constancy of Mind, and, in thy Mercy, deliver it from all Obstinacy and Lightness. Prepare it, O God, to love thee and fear thee, and to be a Child after thy own Heart. And since in this I ask nothing, but that it may become thy Servant, grant my Petition, that I may have the Comfort of such happy Fruit, and thy holy Name be for ever glorified by it.

Against Miscarrying.

O Merciful God, to thee I now recommend myself, beseeching thee, to take me into thy Protection, and to perfect the Blessings thou hast begun in me. Give me Strength to go through my Time; deliver me from all Kinds of ill Accidents, and suffer me not, by any Indiscretion, to interrupt the Course of Nature; that the Fruit I have conceived, having its due Growth and Strength, may be brought forth in its Season.

Shew this Mercy to me, I beseech thee, for, I confess, all is depending on thee. My Health and Strength

must be by thy Blessing, and no human Helps can give those to me, but as thy Goodness shall please to order it. And there are ten thousand Accidents which no Care can foresee or prevent, if thou, O Lord, dost not divert them from me.

To thee, therefore, O God, I make my Address, and pray thy infinite Goodness to watch over me. Be to me a God and Protector, and let no Evil have Power over me. Behold, on thee I depend; in thee I put my Trust: Forsake me not at this Time, neither let my Unworthiness turn away thy Mercies from me. Go along with me every Day, and be a Guide to me in all my Ways: Direct me in all Things what I am to do, and preserve me in Strength, that I may go through my full Time. Let no ill Accident occasion any Thing of Deformity or Lamenels, in what is to be born of me, but shew this Mercy to thy Servant, in granting a sound Mind in a sound Body. This Comfort I ask of thee; grant my Petition, I beseech thee, and be a merciful Father to me.

In LABOUR.

SINCE thou, O Lord, hast so ordered it, that in Punishment of Sin, Children are brought forth in Pain; I now bow down before thee, and offer myself to accept of this Penalty which thou hast ordained. The Sentence is just, and I am bound to acknowledge the Justice, in submitting to the Trouble of it.

But consider, O Lord, I beseech thee, my great Weakness, and give me Strength to bear whatever thou hast appointed for me. Leave me not in this Time of Distress, but by thy heavenly Grace support me. Grant me, if it be thy blessed Will, a good Time, and in thy Mercy moderate my Pains.

Thou art a God of infinite Power, and canst give both Patience and Courage to such us are weak. Shew this thy Power in me, a poor infirm Creature, and now by thy assisting Grace, help me to go through whatever my present Condition brings upon me.

I am a Sinner, and it is just I should suffer. I am an Offender, and it is just I should submit to the Chastisement

lement of thy Hand ; do with me therefore, O Lord, as thou wilt. Thou art just in all thy Ways, and thy Creatures ought with Cheerfulness bow down before thee. Thus, O Lord, I desire to do at present, and from my Heart I now pronounce these sacred Words, Lord, thy Will be done.

§. II. Now is a Time of Trial ; and it is now I am to shew myself faithful to my Lord.

Help me, O God, in being thus faithful, that I may not offend thee by any Impatience; but, with a true Submission, may comply with whatever is appointed for me, in the Order of thy Providence.

Now am I called forth to Battle ; now am I called to shew myself a Soldier of Christ.

O Jesus, look upon this poor infirm Clay, and strengthen me from above; for what can I do, if thou, O Lord, art not my Helper?

O Jesus, I confess my Weakness ; I can do nothing of myself, in thee is my only Trust, and therefore I fly to thee for Refuge.

Take me, who am nothing but Weakness, into thy Protection, and shelter me under the Shadow of thy Wings.

Deliver me, I beseech thee, O God of Mercy, from all Danger, and enable me now to go through my present Difficulties.

Thou hast shewed thy Mercy to me, in carrying me on so far ; finish now, what by thy Blessing is brought to this Point, and help me now in this Hour.

Favour me now in thy Mercy, and grant I may see the Fruit thou hast given me, brought forth with Life.

Save both me and my Child, and mercifully direct those who are about me, that they may do what is best for the Safety of us both.

§. III. Thus, O God, confessing all Power to be in thee, I put myself into thy Hands, and depend entirely upon thee.

And since thou hast promised not to forsake those who put their Trust in thee, I have an entire Confidence in thy Protection, and hope to find thee my powerful Helper.

Stand

Stand by me therefore, O God of Mercy, and now at this Hour, manifest both thy Power and Mercy in me.

Stretch forth thy Hand to me, and say to my Soul, be of good Comfort, fear not, I am thy God.

Thou art my God, I confess it ; thou art my God, and in thee do I put my Trust.

Thou alone knowest what is best for me ; and therefore, as thou knowest, so, Lord, let it be done.

Give me but Grace to do thy Will, and then, O Lord, with a chearful Heart will I say, Lord, thy Will be done.

Thus, O God, I now offer myself to thy good Pleasure, to go through, under thy Assistance, whatever thou shalt appoint.

Knowing my Weakness, I ask for a favourable Labour; but if thou shalt order it otherwise, I bow down in Silence, and only ask this one Thing, that I may have Grace to do thy Will ; and then, O Lord, command what thou wilt.

§. IV. In a difficult Labour.

LORD, help thy Servant, and let her Cry come unto thee.

Give Ear to her, O God, in this Hour of her Distress, and mercifully send her Relief.

Thou hast promised to hear those who call upon thee in Tribulation : Behold this thy Servant is in Anguish ; she calls upon thee, shew thyself now to be her God, and help her.

Deliver her, we beseech thee, from this her Extremity, and rescue her Soul out of these Streights.

Remember her Weakness, O God of Mercy, and according to her Affliction, so give her Strength to bear it.

Have Compassion on her, and being thy Creature, let her find Help from thee, her God, and Creator.

Comfort her, we beseech thee, in the Midst of her Pains, and let her Soul be refreshed with heavenly Sweetness.

Teach her to suffer in the Spirit of her Redeemer ; and thou, O Jesus, communicate to her thy holy Spirit.

Teach

Teach her to bear her present Cross, and help her to bear it with Patience.

Give her Patience now, according to the Extremity of her Pains, and with Comfort support her sinking Spirits.

Give her an humble Heart, that she may quietly submit to her present Trouble, and acknowledge, that what she suffers is much less than she deserves.

Give her a resigned Heart, that she may receive the Cup thou now putteth into her Hand, and think that best for her which is the Accomplishment of thy Will.

Grant she may drink this bitter Cup with a Submission due to the Hand that gives it. Grant, O God, she may remember the Hand is thine.

O Jesus, manifest now thyself a Helper to her; give her a Sense of thy Sufferings; and at present convince her, that suffering with Patience is a good Argument of being thy Disciple.

But grant her then, O God, thy gracious Assistance; that the Weakness of her Nature may be confirmed by heavenly Strength.

§. V. O God, who didst mercifully help *Rebecca* in the Difficulty of her Labour, with the Safety of both her and her Children; *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O God, who didst hear the *Children of Israel* crying in their Distress, and delivered them from the Oppression of *Pharoah*; *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O God, who didst hear the *Israelites* in their great Streights, and didst deliver them from the Red Sea and their Enemies; *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O God, who hadst *David* in thy Protection, and didst deliver him from infinite Dangers; *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O God, who didst hear *Hezechias*, and deliver him both from his Enemies and from the Danger of Death; *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O God, who hadst Compassion on *Daniel*, and didst deliver him from the Den of Lions; *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Jesus,

O Jesus, who didst hear thy Apostles and help them, when they were ready to perish in a Storm ; *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Jesus, who didst stretch forth thy Hand to Peter, and help him, when he was sinking under the Waves ; *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Jesus, who didst deliver the poor Woman from her long Infirmitv, when she could find no Relief in human Help ; *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Jesus, who wast Physician to Peter's Mother-in-law, and didst wonderfully deliver her from the Danger of her Infirmitv ; *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Jesus, who hadst Compassion on the Cananean Woman, and didst mercifully grant her Petition ; *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Jesus, who didst rescue the Ruler's Daughter out of the Jaws of Death, and with new Life restore her a Comfort to her Friends ; *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Holy Ghost, who didst strengthen thy Apostles, and enable them to go through all their difficult Trials ; *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Holy Ghost, who didst wonderfully support the Apostles under the greatest Oppressions ; *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Holy Ghost, who didst enlighten and comfort the Apostles under the Terrors of Cruelty and Death ; *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Holy Ghost, who didst so raise up the Spirits of thy Servants, as even to rejoice in Tribulation ; *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Holy Ghost, who fillest the Souls of thy Servants with inward Joy ; *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O Holy Ghost, who hast given Courage to infinite of thy Servants to stand with Patience under the Rack, Tortures, and wild Beasts, and didst refresh their Spirits with heavenly Sweetness ; *Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.*

O blessed

O blessed Trinity, three Persons and one God, infinite in Power, Compassion, and Mercy : Help this thy Servant, O Lord, and mercifully deliver her.

O God, who hast given us so many Instances of thy infinite Power and Mercy, in the Relief of such as have called upon thee in Distress : Renew now these thy Mercies, we most humbly beseech thee, in this thy Servant : Give her Patience in what she suffers, and grant she may bear it with such Submission as may become a Disciple of Jesus ; give her a Will entirely conformed to thine, that all thy Appointments may be welcome to her. But because she is weak, we implore thy Mercy to have Compassion on her, to help her in her present Circumstances, that she may be happily delivered, with the Safety both of her and her Child. Grant this, O God, we beseech thee, and mercifully hear our Prayers. Help thy Servant, O God, in her Distress, help her, we most earnestly beseech thee, and be thou her Deliverer ; we ask this in the Name of thy only Son, blessed for evermore, and though unworthy of ourselves, yet through him we hope to find Favour in thy Sight. Have Mercy on thy Servant, O God, have Mercy on her.

Thanksgiving upon being Delivered.

WE return thee Thanks, O Father Almighty, for that thou hast been pleased to shew this Mercy to thy Servant. May all Creatures, both in Heaven and Earth, for ever bless thy Name for this thy Goodness ; and grant, we beseech thee, that both Mother and Child may for ever acknowledge the Mercy of this Hour, in the best Thanksgiving of a holy Life. Take them both into thy Protection ; direct those who have the Care of them, and preserve them from all Evil. Amen.

Upon a Miscarriage.

TO thy Protection, O God, we recommend this thy Servant ; as thou hast preserved her hitherto, so we beseech thee, to continue thy Mercy to her. Give her Patience under her Troubles, and teach her to submit to thy holy Will. Give her Grace to confess, that

that thou art sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth, and that what thou art pleased to order is best for us. In this Confession, may she now, in Spirit, bow down before thee, and say from her Heart, Lord, thy Will be done. And thus, O God, under thy special Protection, may she possess her Soul in Peace. Strengthen her, we beseech thee; abide thou with her, and grant her Help, according to her Weakness, whether of Mind or Body; and let it be thy Mercy to her, that she offend thee not, through any Impatience.

In Time of Lying-in. Every Morning.

I Thank thee, O God, for my Preservation this Night: Preserve me likewise this Day, I beseech thee, take me into thy Care, and give me Strength, according to my Necessities: Grant me Patience, and a peaceable Submission, under all Pains and Uneasiness whatever, that I may not offend thee through any Impatience. Direct me, and those who have the Care of me, that I may suffer no Injury through Indiscretion or Oversight; watch thou over me, who knowest all my Weaknesses and Wants, and as thou knowest what is best for me, so I beseech thee to have Compassion on me.

Give me an humble Heart, and a Spirit resigned to thy blessed Will, that I may approve and embrace that as best, whatever thou art pleased to appoint for me or mine. Call my Heart often in the Day, to the Remembrance of thee, my God; and, while I enjoy thy Mercies, may the Memory of them refresh my Soul, and frequently raise it up in Thanksgiving to thy infinite Goodness. And thus, O God, may my Heart be employed, while my Lips are silent.

For this End, I most humbly beseech thee, to grant me the good Government of my Thoughts and Words, that I may not offend in either; that while I enjoy thy Blessings, and stand in daily Need of particular Mercies, I may avoid every Thing that is displeasing to thee. Grant therefore, that thy Goodness towards me may make me more watchful, that I sin not against thee, this

Day,

Day, in Thoughts or in Words. Thus, O God, I recommend myself to thy Protection : I offer myself and all mine to thy particular Care, and beg thy Blessing to be upon me this Day and for ever.

At N I G H T.

TO thee, O God, I render Thanks for my Preservation this Day : Whatever I have received this Day for the Relief of Mind or Body, I acknowledge it to be thy Blessing, and beg I may have at all Times a grateful Sense of thy Mercies towards me. Before thee I now humble myself, confessing in thy Presence all my Failings of this Day, beseeching thee, in thy infinite Mercy, to forgive me whatever I have offended, either in Thoughts, Words, or Deeds. Forgive them all, O God, and let the Blood of thy only Son obtain Mercy for me. Let not my Unworthiness exclude me, since I have him my Advocate. Undertake likewise, I beseech thee, my Protection this Night : Preserve me from all Evil, and grant me, if it be thy blessed Will, a quiet Rest. But, if thou shalt order it otherwise, for my Exercise ; give me Patience, at least to bear it, whatever it be ; give me an humble Heart, ever ready to acknowledge the Justice of all thy Appointments, and to think that best for me, whatever thou orderest. Thus, O God, I recommend myself into thy Hands, and beseech thee, to grant me a happy Rest.

O God, who hast given me this Charge, give me Grace likewise, I beseech thee, that I may duly satisfy it, for their temporal and eternal Good, whom thou hast committed to my Care.

I am very sensible of the many Difficulties there are in doing this well ; and such is my Weakness, that I know myself very unfit for the Task I have upon my Hands. But since it is the Duty of my State, to which I am called, I hope thou, O Lord, wilt enable me to perform it, as I ought, and give me all the Assistance which

which such Weakness as mine requires amidst such Difficulties.

Give me Patience, I beseech thee, to bear with all the Trouble which is unavoidable in this Charge, and that may I never be tired with the continual Solitude, which every Day brings with it. Hence, O God, may I never consult my own Ease, to my Children's Prejudice, by leaving that to others which requires the Care of a Parent's Eye.

Give me thy daily Help, that I may do all with Discretion. Let Discretion accompany me in making a true Judgement of Things, that I may understand when to connive, when to reprove, when to reward, and when to correct.

Give me such Discretion, that I may never connive at what ought to be corrected, or encourage what ought to be reproved: That, whenever I correct or reprove, it may not be done out of Humour or in Passion, but in such a due Manner, as may be most for my Children's Good. Grant likewise, I may not multiply unnecessary Reproofs, and, by my own Uneasiness, bring my Children to a Dislike of my Company, and to a Contempt of all Reproof.

Give me likewise Discretion, O God, in the Love of my Children, that I may love them according to Reason, and not let Inclination, Nature or Passion, have the Government or Direction of this Love. This, O blessed Lord, I ask with all the Earnestness of my Soul; because I am sensible, how very blind the Love towards Children is, which is influenced by my Passion; and that, by the Suggestions of it, Parents become the worst of Enemies to their own Children; laying in them the Seeds, not only of temporal Misfortunes, but of eternal Ruin. And, O God, what an Affliction must this be, when Parents find, that by following their own Humour, that is, by loving themselves too much, they have been thus unnaturally cruel to the Children of their own Bowels.

Wherefore, O God let it be thy Mercy, to me, I beseech thee, not to be one of these unhappy Ones. Teach me rather to deny myself in what is most difficult to Nature; teach me to govern my Inclinations for

for my Children's Good ; and whatever the Difficulty be, yet still, O most gracious Lord, I beg thy helping Grace, that I may rather suffer it all, than be thus injurious to those for whom I desire all Good. For it is far better I should suffer all Self-denials, than my Children shoud be exposed to the sad Effects of my Blindness and Indiscretion.

Help me therefore, O most merciful Father, in this Point ; give me Strength, Grace, and Discretion ; for all these are necessary for me, in my Weakness. Direct me, I beseech thee, by thy heavenly Light, and teach me, what I am to do ; for my Desire is to take such a Method as may most effectually contribute to the making my Children thy faithful Servants. But what can I do in this difficult Task, subject to so many Oversight, if thou, O Lord, dost not help me ?

Have Compassion therefore, on me O God, and go along me, what is best to be done. Grant that my great Solicitude may be, not so much for their Improvement in what is vain and empty, as for the Accomplishment of their better Part : For bringing their Minds to the Temper of the Gospel, in all Humility and Meekness, in all Patience, Charity, and Obedience : For imprinting in their Souls a deep Sense of the Love and Fear which are due to thee ; and for making them skilled in the Ways of thy Commandments, and doing Good to all.

This is what I desire to do ; help me, O blessed Lord, in the Accomplishment of my Desires, and grant I may not give them Encouragement, or indiscreetly seek to please them in such Things as are contrary to what I here propose, and likely to draw their Hearts from thee. Make me wise in this, O God, and may I teach them this Wisdom to love and seek thee above all Things, and to be afraid of every Thing injurious to the Love which is due to thee. This, I know, is hard : But teach me, O God, in this, and all other Particulars, that I may teach them.

That

That God would bless their Children.

TO thy Care, O God, I recommend my Children, most humbly beseeching thee to be a Father to them, and every Day to favour them with thy Blessing. Preserve them from all Evil, let no Misfortune do them any Injury, and, by thy holy Grace, keep them from every Thing that is displeasing to thee.

Shew thy Power in them, I beseech thee, and preserve them from the Corruption of the World. Give them Inclinations to Good, and confirm them in Resolutions of being faithful to thee. Establish them against the Solicitations of ill Company, and permit them not to be insnared by such as lead to Evil.

Give them such Discretion, as is necessary in this deceitful World; that they may not admire Shadows, nor catch at empty and superficial Goods. Raise their Hearts to the Love of what is eternal; and for gaining this, teach them to despise all that is earthly.

Give them Courage to resist or decline whatever is sinful, and suffer no Temptation to prevail against them. Deliver them from a rash, giddy, or vain Mind, and fix in their Hearts such sound Principles, that they may be faithful both to God and Man. Be thou, O God, a perpetual Light, a Guide, and a Helper to them. Let no Unworthiness of theirs oblige thee to forsake them, I beseech thee, in all their Ways; and if ever, through human Weakness, they offend thee, give them thy Grace to rise again, and deliver them not up to a reprobate Mind. Into thy Hands, O God, I recommend them; be thou a God and Father to them, and, by thy Grace, may they come at length to have a Part in thy Inheritance. Amen.

That God would direct them in the Choice of a State of Life.

O Almighty God, by whom all Things move, undertake, I beseech thee, the Care of my Children [er my Child] and since both their temporal and eternal Good, in a great Measure depends on the Choice they

they make, in settling for Life; direct them in this great Affair, and suffer them not to do any Thing through ill Advice, Rashness, Indiscretion, or Passion. Defend them, O God, if it be thy blessed Will, from making an ill Choice, and let it be thy Mercy to them, to lead them to that which may be their Comfort here, and be the Means of coming at length to the Possession of thee.

Wherefore, O blessed Lord, I implore thy Grace upon them, that they may not be under the Influence of Pride, or worldly Interest, or other human Respects: But grant, I beseech thee, that as Eternity is infinitely above all that is temporal, so they may consider it in the first Place, and think nothing fit for their Choice, where this, through ill Circumstances, must be put to the Hazard, or any Ways exposed. Help them, O God, in this, give them Understanding to know Things; Discretion to discern what is for their Good, and Resolution to make Choice of it. In this great Affair, leave them not to themselves, but be thou their Light and their Guide, that they may do what is for the Comfort of their Friends, and for their own everlasting Good. Hear me, O merciful Father, and grant this my Petition, that I may for ever give Praise to thy Name.

Thanksgiving for any particular Blessing.

TO thee, O eternal Father, I render Thanks for this thy particular Mercy to me; I acknowledge myself unworthy of the least of thy Favours, having lived ungrateful amidst the wonderful Effects of thy Goodness towards me; and every Day being encompassed with Blessings, yet how little mindful have I been of the Hand from whence they came! Hence I cannot but admire thy Bounty, which, not checked by my Ingratitude, is still opening its Treasures to me. But, when I look farther upon my own unhappy Self, and see how often, under the Enjoyment of thy Mercies, I have transgressed thy Commands, and, confederate with the worst of Enemies, have rebelliously lifted up my Head against thee, abusing thy own Gifts,

to

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to thy greater Displeasure ; and yet, notwithstanding these wretched Provocations, still find thy Mercies daily flowing in upon me, with the Addition of new Favours : When I reflect upon this my infamous Ingratitude, and this thy infinite Goodness, what can I do, but fall down surprized, and with the profoundest Homage adore thy Mercy, which I cannot comprehend, which is inviting with Blessings, where the greatest of all Punishments are due !

What can I do but publish thy Praises, and confess to the whole Creation, that thou art infinite in Mercy and Goodness, and that thy Name is infinitely adorable.

But what is all that I can say, who am but an inconsiderable and sinful Worm ? Rather let all Creatures join in the Praises of their Lord ; and you, blessed Spirits, who assist before the Throne, you, who better know how merciful and good our Lord is, fall down and adore before him. Blessing, and Glory, and Wisdom, and Thanksgiving, and Honour, and Power, and Might, be unto our God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

But still there is one Homage which particularly belongs to me ; and that is, so to confess the Engagement of thy Goodness, O God, as to offer myself to thee for thy Servant for ever,

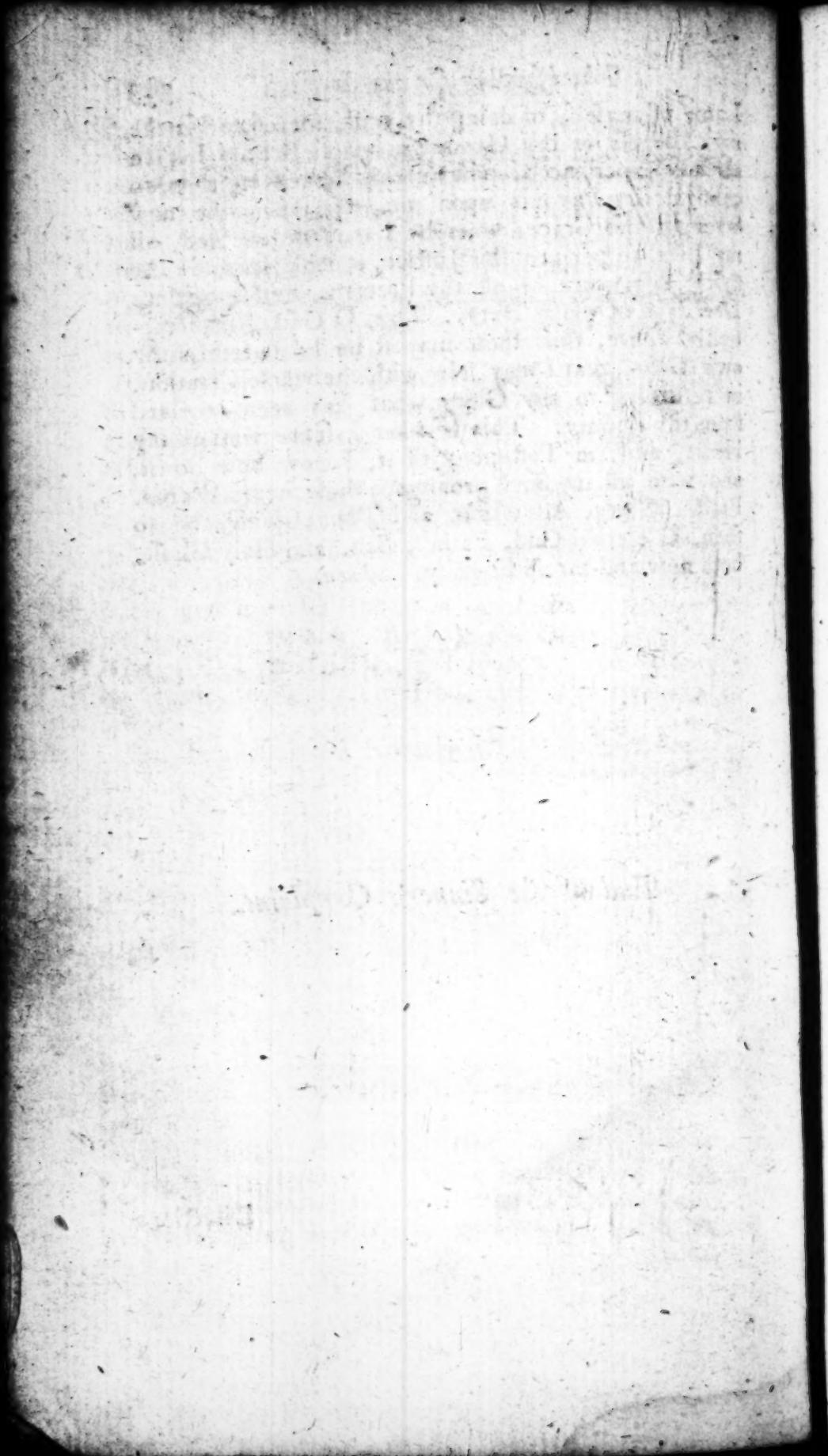
Behold then, this I here do at this Moment ; I acknowledge thy Mercy to me, though most unworthy ; I acknowledge myself, besides infinite other Titles, now engaged to thee by this Effect of thy Goodness ; and therefore I here now, prostrate before thee, confess this Obligation, and offer myself to live faithful in thy Service for ever. I offer myself to live in the Observance of thy Law, and in doing thy Will ; because it is just that what is received from thee should be again returned to thee.

This I own to be just, and that my Guilt will be monstrous Ingratitude, if, again unmindful of thee, I trample on thy Commandments and despise thy Law. But knowing my own Weakness, and how incapable I am,

I am, of myself, of doing thy Will, therefore I make my Address to thy Goodness, whose Bounty I have already experienced, most humbly beseeching thee, to confirm thy Favours upon me, by giving me new Strength and Grace, whereby I may be enabled, all my Life, to perform this Justice, which I desire, in the strict Observance of all thy Precepts, and a zealous Discharge of every Duty. This, O God, I most earnestly desire, that thou mayest be honoured in thy own Gifts, that I may join with the whole Creation, in returning to thy Glory what has been received from thy Bounty. This is what I desire with all my Heart; and, in Testimony of it, I now bow down, and with all my Soul pronounce these sacred Words: Praise, Glory, Adoration, and Thanksgiving, be to thee, O eternal God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, both now and for all Eternity. *Amen.*

End of the Sinner's Complaint.

Directions



Directions, Entertainments, and Affections,
During the Time of MASS.

EVERY DEVOUT CHRISTIAN

Should carefully observe these Three Rules.

1. *To bear Mass daily, if Health, Leisure, and Opportunity, permit.*
2. *Not to go to Mass for Fashion-sake, or out of Custom; but out of a deep Sense of the incomprehensible Greatness of this divine Sacrifice; and out of a fervent Desire to contemplate God, clothed with our Humanity, under the Shapes of Bread and Wine in the Priest's Hands.*
3. *Not to enter into the Place designed for this holy Purpose, as if it were a Play-house: But with a reverend, religious, recollected Composition, of all our exterior and interior Senses; and briefly, with such a Behaviour as may be seem one who is to be honoured with the Presence and Speech of G O D.*

Preparatory Prayers before MASS.

Whilst the Priest is vesting himself, you may entertain yourself with some of these following Prayers and Elevations.

Prostrate before the Throne of thy Divine Majesty, O dread Sovereign! I humbly implore thy Pardon for my Offences, thy Grace for a Supply of my Indignity, and thy Love to ravish my Soul and Senses, in the Contemplation of this sacred Mystery; that my whole interior and exterior Man may be entirely employed in praising and admiring thy infinite Goodness and Mercy.

O sweet Jesu! I will accompany thee to Mount Calvary; make me Partaker, I beseech thee, of that Charity which conducted thee thither: Give me such a Feeling of thy Sufferings as had the Daughters of Sion,

meeting thee with the Cross on thy Shoulders, a Cord about thy Neck, and a thorny Crown on thy Head: Grant me a Resignation of my Will to thine, like that of thy Virgin Mother, at the Foot of thy Cross: And, by the Merits of thy Sufferings and Constancy, bestow on me the Gift of Perseverance in thy Love and Service.

O Divine Spirit! the faithful Bridegroom of my Soul! Descend now graciously into it; purify it from the Dross of its Imperfections, and replenish it with the Flames of thy sacred Affections; that it may breathe nothing but thy Love, and desire nothing but the Accomplishment of thy Will.

At the Beginning of M A S S.

The Priest's bowing down before the Altar at his Confiteor, represents our Saviour, prostrate at his Prayers before his eternal Father in the Garden, for the Remission of your Sins: Make you also a general Confession of your Sins with the Priest, and humble yourself before the Divine Majesty, saying,

I Humbly cast myself, O my sweet Redeemer, at thy sacred Feet, desiring to wash them with my Tears, in Acknowledgement of my Wickedness; O Jesu, take Compassion on thy poor Creature, redeemed with thy precious Blood, who repents him heartily of all his past Sins, and purposes seriously, by the Assistance of thy Grace, to serve thee more faithfully, seek thee more diligently, and love thee more fervently for the future.

At the Introit.

I Rejoice, O eternal Lord God! in that thou art what thou art; and that there is no Being but by thee only. Thou well knowest, O infinite Goodness! what thyself art, and what I am: Thou art all, and I am nothing: And yet thou seekest after me!

At Kyrie-Eleison.

HAVE Mercy, *O Lord*, on all those who are in mortal Sin; reclaim their perverse Wills to thy Love, and give them the Grace of true and perfect Repentance, that thy Name may be magnified, thy Goodness extolled, and thy Praises celebrated by them, and all thy Creatures.

At Gloria in Excelsis.

O My God, how joyfully, affectionately, incessantly, do the Angels adore thee, and sing forth thy divine Praises! And how slack are Men in serving, honouring and loving thee? O how highly does the Fervour and Diligence of those blessed Spirits delight me, and how much does Men's Negligence and Forgetfulness displease me?

Lord, I humbly adore thee with those holy Quiers, and heartily desire, that the whole World would render thee all due Honour, Homage and Adoration. Lift up my Heart, *O my Lord!* and lodge my Affections in the Place where my Treasure lies: Let all that I think, say or do, intend thy Honour; and let my Soul and Tongue resound always, Glory be to God on high.

At Dominus vobiscum.

BE thou always with me, *O my God!* and let thy Grace never depart from me.

At the Prayers or Collects.

O Eternal *Lord God!* look mercifully on thy well-beloved Spouse the Catholic Church; and graciously receive the Petitions which she humbly presents to the Throne of thy sacred Majesty by this Priest's Mediation and Ministry. Hear us, *O Lord!* and help us for thy dear Son's Sake, our only Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ.

At the Epistle.

O Sweet Saviour ! I most humbly beseech thee, by the Merits of all thy unjust Sufferings, to give me Courage, Constancy and Patience, in all such Occasions of Injuries, Crosses, and Contradictions, as thy Divine Providence shall permit to befall me, during this my Life's Pilgrimage. Grant, that I may equally adore thy eternal Will in Prosperity and Adversity, and resignedly submit myself, and all that any Way concerns me, to thy most just and sacred Disposition.

At the Gospel.

Illuminate my interior Eyes, *O God of my Heart!* unveil my Understanding and inflame my Affections, that I may clearly see and know thy holy Will, and chearfully accomplish thy sacred Precepts, Counsels, and Inspirations !

At the Creed.

O Sovereign Deity ! I firmly believe thee to be one God in three Persons ; who madest all Things of Nothing. I believe that the second Person became Man in blessed Mary's Womb by the holy Ghost's Operation; and that he died for me and all Mankind on the Cross. I believe that he arose from Death, that he ascended into Heaven, and that he shall judge the whole World in the last Day. I believe the holy Catholic Church, and whatsoever she teaches and defines. And in this Faith I will live and die.

For all Unbelievers.

TAKE Pity, *O Lord!* on all Infidels, Hereticks, and Schismaticks ; and remember, *O most compassionate Creator!* that thy powerful Hand did not bring these perfect Products out of their eternal Nothing, and stamp their rational Souls with thy own sacred Image, in Order to destroy and abandon them, since

since thou hast been graciously pleased to send down thy only Son my dear Saviour, to redeem and ransom them, as well as my unworthy Self, with the Price of his most precious Blood.

Send therefore, *O Sovereign Lord, and sincere Lover of all Souls!* some efficacious Beams of thy heavenly Light into their dark and deceived Understandings, that they may see the Truths of thy sacred Mysteries; and give them Grace to submit their Necks to the sweet and easy Yoke of thy Precepts, and thy Church's Prescripts.

Ah, my dear Lord! what have I done for thee, or what have I deserved of thee, that I should be called to thy saving Faith, and be made a Member of thy sacred Church? Impart, I beseech thee, the like Favour to these thy misled, mistaken, and unbelieving Creatures; that they may (with me) faithfully acknowledge, adore, and love thee, their glorious Maker and Redeemer; admiringly praise and magnify thy Goodness, and joyfully celebrate thy Mercies with Canticles of eternal Gratitude and Thanksgiving.

At the Offertory.

O Eternal Father! in Union of that ineffable Love, wherewith my dear Saviour offered up himself on the Cross to thy divine Majesty; I also offer up myself with him, humbly beseeching thee to direct all my Thoughts, Words, and Works, to thy Honour, to my own Good, to my Neighbour's Edification.

I offer up this thy divine Sacrifice to the Glory of thy Name, to the Honour of thy Angels and Saints, to satisfy for my Sins, to thank thee for thy Benefits, to obtain a Supply of my temporal and spiritual Necessities.

I particularly offer it up to obtain this Virtue, conquer this Temptation, amend this Imperfection, surmount this Passion; and for all such as have desired my Prayers, or to whom I have promised them.

At Lavabo.

*A*mplius lava me, &c. Dew down, O merciful Creator! one small Drop of thy divine Grace into my sinful Soul; or rather shower down an Abundance of thy sweet Waters on me, to cleanse me from my enormous Crimes and Impurities.

Asperges me Hysops, &c. Besprinkle my Soul, O Sovereign Lord God! with the Hysop of thy Grace, that I may serve thee more purely; *Wash me with thy sacred Waters, till I become whiter than the driven Snow, &c.*

At the Preface.

HOW desirable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord God of Hosts! My Soul sighs, pants and thirsts after thee more than the wearied Stag breathes after the refreshing Fountains. Draw me after thee, O divine Source of all Sweetness! and I shall run cheerfully after the Odours of thy Perfumes: For what do I seek but thee, or what can satisfy me but thyself in Heaven or in Earth!

O that the Memory of thy eternal good Things remained always deeply engraved in my Soul; how easily should I then disdain all temporal, perishable, and worldly Trifles!

O my God and my All, when shall I be so happy as to behold thee clearly in thy heavenly Glory?

At Sanctus.

HOLY, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabbath: Heaven and Earth are full of the Majesty of thy Glory; Hosanna to the highest.

O Holy of Holies! give me a Glimpse of thy glorious Self, that my illuminated Soul may praise thee more purely, and love thee more perfectly.

O celestial Seraphims! who incessantly praise my God with the sweet Echoes of your eternally repeated Holy, descend from Heaven to help my desirous Heart in singing forth his Praises; that I may also become holy,

holy, pure and perfect, in the Presence of my Lord and Maker.

At the first Memento.

INTO thy sacred Hands, O sweet Saviour! I recommend my Soul with all its Faculties, my Body with all its Senses, my whole interior and exterior Man with all its Affections and Actions.

Preserve me, O all powerful Redeemer! from all Sin and Impurity; and give me Perseverance in thy Love and Service.

Let thy undrainable Fountain of Mercy, O Lord Jesu! extend also itself towards my Kindred, Friends, Enemies (*particularly towards such and such*) and all those for whom I ought to offer up my Prayers to thy divine Majesty.

At the Elevation of the sacred Host and Chalice.

O Adorable Majesty! in Union of this affectionate Reverence, which my Redeemer now renders thee; in Memory of his dolorous Passion; and in Acknowledgement of my own Nothing, and thy infinite Greatness; I humbly offer thee a perpetual Submission of all my Being, all my Powers, all my Faculties. Be thou eternally exalted, admired, and glorified, O Holy, Holy, Holy Trinity, my Lord, my God, my All.

At the Second Memento.

O Compassionate Creator, take Pity on the poor Souls in *Purgatory* (*particularly such and such*) and let the same Mercy, which has been graciously pleased to pardon their Impieties, mitigate also their Punishments; that by the Merits of thy dear Son's Death and Passion (which are here in this holy Sacrifice most humbly presented to thy Sacred Majesty in their Behalf) they may speedily be translated to that State of Glory for which thou eternally designest them.

At the Pater Noster.

1. O Heavenly Father! I most heartily congratulate thy infinite Glory and Greatness. Give, I beseech thee, the Light of thy Faith to all Infidels, and the Grace of thy Love and Charity to all Christians; that thy sacred Name may be sanctified by all Men on Earth, as it is by the Blessed in Heaven.

2. O holy, holy, holy Trinity! enter, remain, reign in our Hearts, Souls, Affections: *That we may serve thee, love thee, honour thee on Earth, as thy Saints do in Heaven.*

3. Teach me, O Lord to perform thy Will, [1.] Perfectly. [2.] Purely. [3.] Promptly. [4.] Perseverantly.

4. O Bread of Life! which descendest from Heaven, to give Life to the World! give thyself to my Soul, that I may live by thee, in thee, for thee, by thy Grace, in thy Favour, for thy Honour.

5. O liberal Father! for the Love of thee I freely forgive all such as have any Way offended me; and for the Love of thy dear Son I beg Forgiveness of all my own Offences against thy divine Majesty.

6. Behold, O my blessed Creator! how I am on all Sides encompassed with cruel Enemies: Lord, I refuse not the Combat, since it is thy Will; but I beg thy gracious Assistance, that I may get the Victory, and that thou mayest have the Glory.

7. Deliver me, O all powerful Lord God! from all Evil; from all corporal, spiritual, temporal, eternal Miseries: From Sin, from myself, and from whatsoever displeases thy divine, infinite, amiable, adorable Majesty.

At the first Agnus Dei.

O Sweet Lamb of God, pardon all my Sins: And particularly such and such an one, wherein I have most grievously and frequently offended.

At the second Agnus Dei.

O Innocent Lamb of God, implant all Virtues in my Soul; and especially this and this, which I seem most to stand in Need of.

At the third Agnus Dei.

O Peaceable, pure and perfect Lamb of God, give me Peace of Conscience, Purity of Heart, Perfection of Spirit, &c. and whatsoever will render me most agreeable to thy divine Majesty.

At Domine non sum dignus.

Humbling myself in the Presence of thy sacred Majesty, O sovereign Lord Jesu, I adore thy Goodness, Greatness, and Glory, and acknowledge my own Unworthiness, Baseness, and Nothing.

Whilst the Priest communicates, consider the spiritual Communion consists in these two Points.

1. A Lively Faith of your Saviour's real Presence in the Sacrament.

2. An ardent Desire to receive him into your Soul, and to be perfectly united to him.

O my sweet Saviour, the sovereign Lord of my Heart, and the beloved Object of my Affections! I adore thy sacred Body, Blood, Soul, Divinity, covered under these sacramental Forms. O that I had all the necessary Dispositions of a worthy Communicant. Do thou only speak the Word, O all powerful Lord God, and my Soul shall be saved. Enter, O my beloved Bridegroom, into this poor Lodging; enrich it with thy infinite Perfections: fit it up (as thyself best knowest and pleasest) for thy own Entertainment.

At the last Prayers.

O My God, my Desire is always to praise thee for thy always continued Favours. But, ah! my Frailty, Tepidity, and Weakness, interrupt my Desires, Wishes and Affections: Make Use therefore of thy own Goodness, *O my gracious Redeemer!* in supplying my present Defects, pardoning my past Negligences, preserving me from future Failings, and praising thyself in me, and all thy Creatures.

At the Priest's final Benediction.

O Sweet Jesu! bestow on me this Day thy Blessing with this of thy Priest; preserve me from all Sin, and give me Perseverance in thy Service; that at the last Day of thy dreadful Judgement, I may receive that happy Benediction, amongst thy elect and predestinate Children, of *Venite Benediciti:* Come, ye blessed of my Father, and take Possession of the Kingdom which was prepared for you from all Eternity.

F I N I S.



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